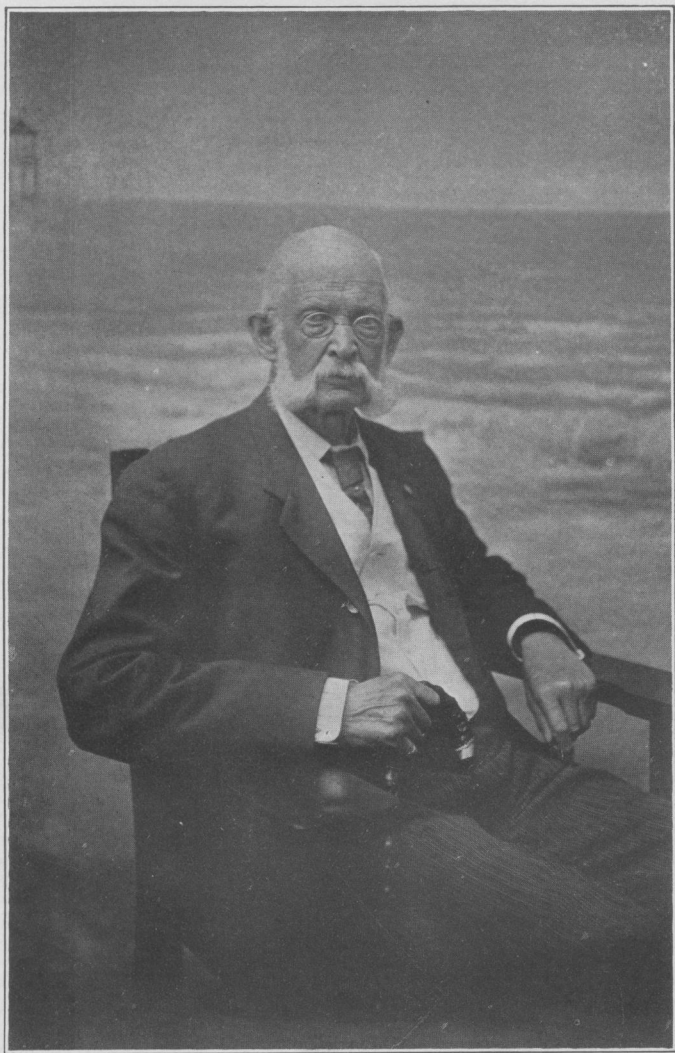




THE AUTHOR ON HIS 75TH BIRTHDAY, JULY 8, 1910.
(Born the Day the Liberty Bell Was Cracked.)

OPTIC VIEWS AND
IMPRESSIONS
OF THE
NATIONAL SOLDIERS'
HOME

South Branch N. H. D. V. S.
Near HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

As Seen and Described by One of Its Members

ILLUSTRATED

1910
E. L. COBB
South Branch N. H. D. V. S.
VIRGINIA

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BY E. L. COBB

Dedication

TO MY COMRADES who left home and loved ones, in the darkest hour of our Nation's history, to save it from dissolution, and preserve its motto, "E Pluribus Unum," this book is fraternally dedicated.

With the hope that they may be cheered with the thought, after perusing these pages, that "The Gates stand wide open" to welcome them in their old age, and find a resting place while waiting the summons of our Supreme Commander to answer the new roll-call, and be mustered for their reward.

THE AUTHOR

National Home, D.V.S.
Southern Branch, Va.
November, 1905

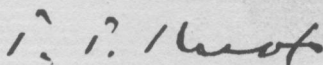
National Soldiers' Home, Virginia,
July 1, 1910.

Mr. E. L. Cobb,
National Soldiers' Home, Virginia.

Dear Sir:

I have read the manuscript of your book, "Optic Views and Impressions", and consider it a very creditable production, and the only one of this character that I have seen. It represents our Home life and should be of decided interest to all who regard the welfare of the Home and its members. It is quite full and correctly represents the conditions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. B. Hoof". The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

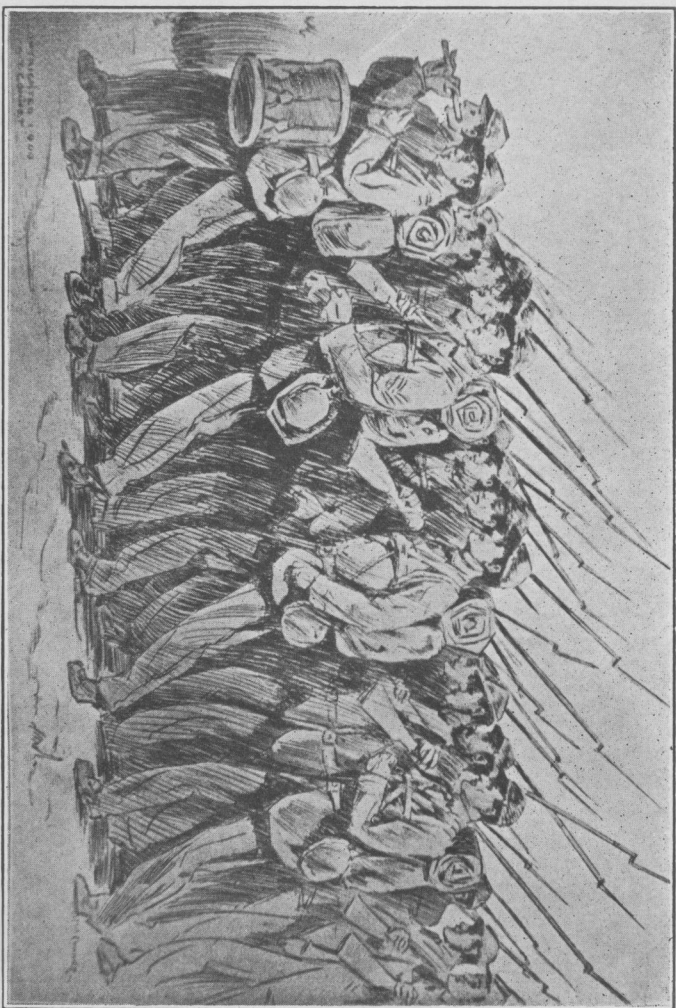
Governor.

INTRODUCTION

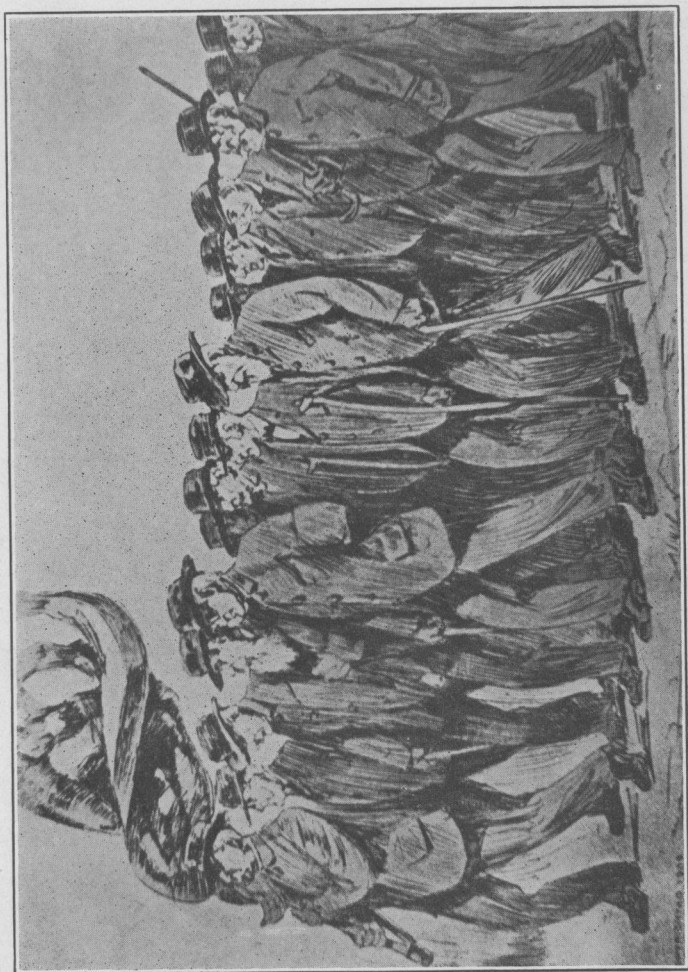
The writer was born the day the Liberty Bell was cracked and therefore is in his seventy-first year. He entered the Army on the first call for troops, and was mustered into the service May 27, 1861. After service in the Army of the Potomac, Army of the Cumberland, 17th Corps, and Quartermaster-General's Office at Washington, D. C., in various capacities, resigned July 30, 1865. After an active business life, embracing both successes and misfortunes, he was thrown out of employment in 1895, by one of the great Trusts, as being too old, and from that time to the day of entering the Home was confronted with the same excuse in all applications for employment, although ripe in business experience and qualifications, and able to fill almost any clerical position.

To determine what to do under the circumstances was a serious and vexatious question. The thought of going to a Soldiers' Home would come up, but the statements made by some who had been members of both National and State Homes were far from pleasing, and would bring up visions of an Almshouse on an extensive scale, carried on under severe and strict discipline for their inmates. (The word inmate is not used in the National Homes.) We are not inmates, but members, showing that we are entitled by right of claim to all the U. S. Government can do for us in our old age, as a slight recompense in part for what we accomplished in our youth in saving our Country from dissolution and ruin. We are therefore not mendicants or paupers, but OLD SOLDIERS and SAILORS, who sacrificed our health and the opportunities, had we stayed at home, of accumulating wealth.

After struggling along for years the realization that my ability to earn a living was growing less, fully confirming the late ruling of the Pension Bureau, viz., that a soldier at 70 years of age was



THE BOYS OF 1861.



THE VETS OF 1910.

wholly disabled, determined me to enter the Home. Wife and children looked upon such a step as a great mistake, which reflected upon them and their social standing. There was a disposition on the part of the writer not to boast about it, knowing however that if not satisfied, all that one had to do was to ask for a discharge.

Having reached such a decision, the 27th day of August, 1904 (after my application had been approved), found me at the Main Entrance. May the surprise be as agreeable, when mustered out of this life, and standing before the Supreme Commander, to hear the glad words, "Welcome, good and faithful Soldier of the Cross."

The welcome received from the Governor, Colonel William Thompson, and the officers of his Staff, and what my eyes have seen of this beautiful Home and its surroundings, prompt me to write this little book of information, in order to remove the false impressions which seem to prevail everywhere regarding "Soldiers' Homes," both National and State, that have been so liberally provided and so generously fitted up

for us in which to pass our days in our declining years. I therefore give it the title of "Optic Views and Impressions, as Seen and Described by a Member of the National Soldiers' Home, D. V. S., Virginia."

September, 1905.

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COLONEL WILLIAM THOMPSON
Governor January 11, 1901, to December 31, 1905

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CHAPTER I.

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS.

The National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers was created by Act of Congress approved March 3, 1865. The original designation was "The National Asylum"; but the word "Home" was substituted for "Asylum" by the Act of January 23, 1873.

The organic law provided a Board of Managers of one hundred of the most prominent men of the country,—the President, Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, Chief Justice, Lieutenant-General, Major-Generals, Admiral, Rear Admirals, Senators, Congressmen, and the leading men of every profession.

This body, however, failed to take action of any kind, and by the Act of March 21, 1867, Congress appointed a Board of twelve Managers, to consist of the President, the Secretary

of War, and the Chief Justice ex-officio, and nine members, to serve two, four, and six years respectively, from States which furnished organized Union troops during the Civil War.

The Managers, thus first appointed, promptly met and organized in June, 1866, to take up their work. They elected Major-General Benjamin F. Butler as their President, together with two Vice-Presidents and a Secretary.

The Board determined to establish three branches of the Home: one in the New England States, one in the Middle States, and the other in the West.

After much labor of committees in traveling from place to place to examine sites, and in considering the claims of rival localities, it was determined to locate the Eastern Branch at Togus, Maine; the Northwestern Branch at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the Great Central Branch at Dayton, Ohio.

These three branches were constructed and occupied within two years, and at once became



GENERAL WILLIAM J. SEWELL
Late President of the Board of Managers and
Local Manager. Died December 27, 1901.

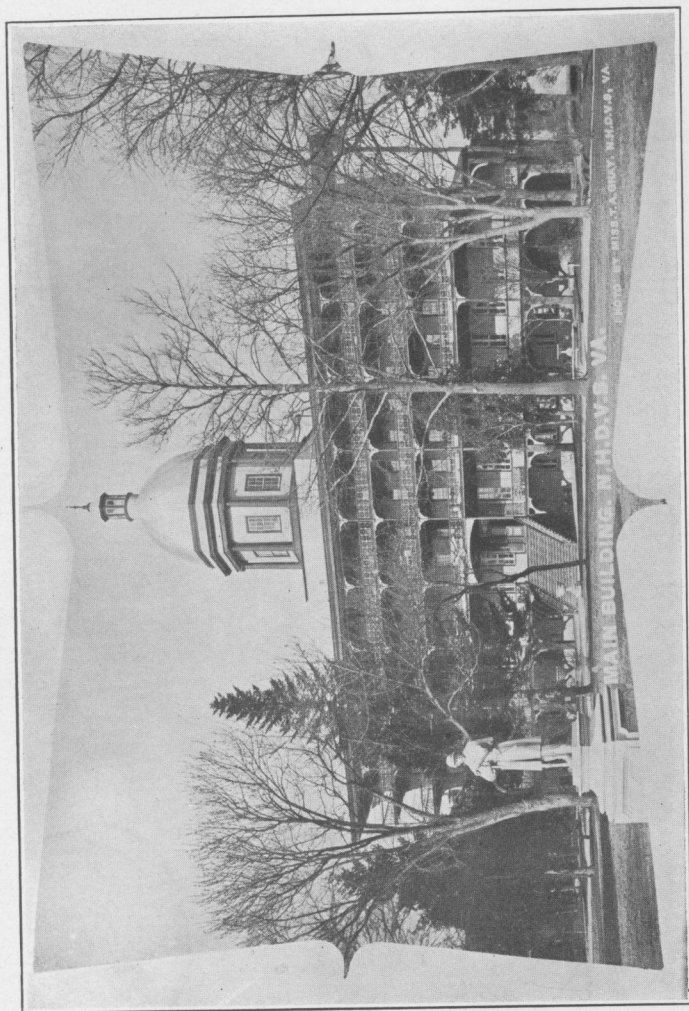
so overcrowded that it was found necessary to have a fourth branch, particularly for the very large number of old soldiers suffering from pulmonary troubles who required a milder climate than that of either of the then existing branches.

Thus, in the year 1870, the Committee of the Board selected for the purpose of finding a proper location in the South, recommended that the property known as the Chesapeake Female Seminary, situated on the north bank of Hampton Roads, and between Old Point Comfort and the ancient town of Hampton, be purchased and used as the Southern Branch National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

The organic law of the National Home specified that volunteer soldiers and sailors of the Army and Navy, disabled while in line of duty, should be eligible for membership, and that the officers of the Home should be chosen from among the volunteer officers of the Union forces in the War of the Rebellion. Both of

these provisions having been observed by the Board of Managers, the door was opened by subsequent acts of legislation, to admit any soldier or sailor who had served as a volunteer in any war and who had become disabled by bad health, accident, or age. Also to permit the appointment as an officer of any one who would be eligible for admission if disabled, if practicable. A still later Act permits the appointment of surgeons or other medical officers without requiring preceding military service.

The organic Act also provided that the fund which had accumulated in the Treasury from the fines of insubordinate soldiers, the forfeitures in case of desertions and the unclaimed money of deceased soldiers and officers (amounting at the close of the Civil War to six millions of dollars), should be devoted to the support of the National Home. In the year 1875, Congress repealed this provision, and took up the support of the Home by direct annual appropriation, as a fixed charge in the Sundry Civil Bill.



THE MAIN BUILDING

The officers of the Southern Branch are the Governor, Treasurer, Surgeon, Quartermaster, Commissary of Subsistence, and Chaplain. The Chesapeake Female Seminary was organized under the auspices of the Baptist denomination, and the Seminary building, dedicated in the year 1854, is now known as "The Main Building of the Southern Branch."

The outbreak of the Civil War caused the students to desert its halls, and upon the retirement of the Confederate troops it was seized by the Union forces and used as a hospital to which the wounded Union and Confederate officers were brought from the battlefields of Virginia and North Carolina, and cared for side by side. From the association of these officers in this now historic building sprang some of the most romantic and beautiful friendships between enemies of the battlefield; some of which friendships have strengthened and lightened the lives of heroic men of the North and the South, until the one or the other listened to the bugle call of "Taps"

sounded over the gray hairs of his friend. The most notable instance known to the writer is the strong attachment existing between Colonel William Lamb, the defender of Fort Fisher, and General N. M. Curtis, who commanded the storming column which carried the works by heroic assault. The two commanders met on the parapets of the fort in desperate personal encounter; each desperately wounded the other, and both were brought to the "McClellan Hospital," as the main building was then called, where they were snatched from the jaws of death by tender care, and where they learned to know and love each other. This love and friendship has grown stronger with years and is most profound.

Colonel Lamb is a resident of Norfolk, and General Curtis is Assistant Inspector-General of the National Home, and while inspecting the Southern Branch never fails to point out the spot where he rested in his cot. Reverend Charles A. Raymond, who had been Principal of the Seminary, was continued in charge for



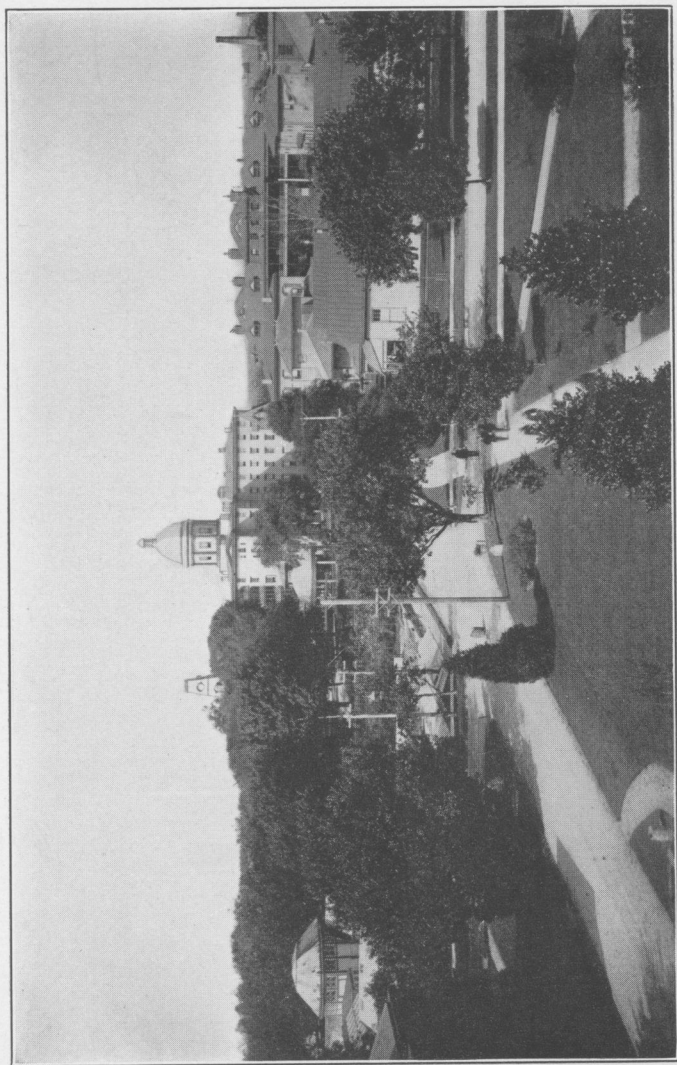
LATE CAPTAIN P. T. WOODFIN
Governor, March 31, 1874, to August 21, 1901.

the first year after the purchase of the property by the Board of Managers. General Edward W. Hincks, of Massachusetts, was appointed as the first regular Governor in 1871, and he, having been transferred to the command of the Northwestern Branch at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was succeeded on January 16, 1873, by Colonel Philip T. Woodfin, who continued in that capacity until his death on August 24, 1901.

Upon the death of Colonel Woodfin, Colonel William Thompson, who for nineteen years had performed the duties of Treasurer so successfully and so thoroughly and acceptably to the Board of Managers, was promoted to fill the responsible position; a just and fitting reward and recognition for his long, able, and faithful services. At the present writing, Governor Thompson, having, after a service of twenty-eight years, tendered his resignation at the request of the Board of Managers, is awaiting the arrival of his successor, Colonel Thomas T. Knox, U. S. A.,

retired, who has been designated to succeed him.

This feeble historical sketch has been prepared during the administration of Colonel Thompson, and the author would consider himself derelict in his duty to this Branch, and recreant to a trust almost held sacred by him, were he not to give expression to his feelings with regards to the able, kind and courteous administration of the institution, and of the uniform home-like treatment of himself and all others coming under his observation.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE HOME

CHAPTER II.

TOPOGRAPHY.

The grounds are bounded by a water-front which reaches along the shore of Hampton Bay for about half a mile, protected by a cement breakwater running its full length from Mill Creek to Jones' Creek, which divides it from the Hampton Industrial School. The water on three sides and a high slat fence in the rear prevent any one from going in or coming out without authority from the Governor. The Home may be entered by either of the three gates, or at the wharf, where the supplies for the Home are delivered by steamers or sailing vessels. There are about 26 acres owned by the Government within the enclosure. There are 43 acres leased from the Industrial School for Colored and Indians which adjoins the ground on the opposite side of Jones' Creek, upon which are erected all the officers' quarters (except the

Governor's) and the hospital buildings and annexes, four of the company barracks, stables, etc., also the chapel and nurses' quarters. Walks and drives have been laid out by expert landscape gardeners, and besides the old picturesque trees that stood here years before it was used for its present purpose, thousands of others have been planted along the walks and driveways, which are covered with either oyster shells or ground stone, replenished each year and made smooth and solid with heavy rollers.

A large campus lies between the main building and the water-front, upon which is the flag-staff, where Old Glory constantly waves, supported on either side by two brass cannon used in the Civil War.

A new and beautiful band-stand has just been completed; its architecture is a perfect representation of that of ancient Greece. The Home Band furnishes the finest classic music daily, except Mondays and Saturdays, and on days when their services are required for funerals, which is frequently every day in the week except



EX-GOVERNOR, LIEUTENANT FRANKLIN MURPHY
Board of Managers,
Local Manager of Southern Branch.

Sundays. No funerals take place on that day, the dead being kept in the Morgue until the following Monday.

Placed along the walks are many large vases filled with flowers and ferns in summer; also three life size statues, representing Peace, Justice, and War, stand on the Campus facing Hampton Roads.

CHAPTER III.

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ADMISSION.

Any honorably discharged officer, soldier or sailor who served in the Mexican, Civil or Spanish wars, and in the Provisional army, and who is disabled from wounds, disease, or otherwise, and who from such causes is incapable of earning a living, is entitled to the privileges of the Home. Those receiving a pension in excess of \$16.00 per month are not eligible for admission except for special reasons.

The Home has no facilities for the care of insane patients, and as a rule, this class of patients is not received, and when such a condition develops in those who are already members of the Home, they are sent to the Government Asylum at Washington.

"In all references made to those who are in the Home, they are designated as *members* in all official orders or communications." For



THE AUTHOR
As He Appeared When He Entered the Home.

such as are entitled to the privileges of the Home, a blank application is provided which can be obtained from any member of the Board of Managers, or from the Home, and when filled out in accordance with instructions contained therein, if found eligible they are duly admitted. Applicants on original admission, who are unable to pay their transportation from their place of residence, are furnished the same when public funds for the purpose are available.

CHAPTER IV.

RULES GOVERNING THE DISCIPLINE FOR THE PROPER CARE OF THE HOME AND ITS MEMBERS.

The rules and orders governing the Home have been made from time to time by the Board of Managers to suit the conditions, and for the proper punishment for any violation of such rules or orders, which are so light and easy that they can hardly be considered as at all severe, providing members are obedient thereto. All members are given a red card, permitting them to pass in and out with as much freedom as any citizen between the hours of 7 a. m. and 7 p. m., except Sundays, and this privilege may be extended to 8.30 p. m., or longer, if their conduct has been proper and no punishments for dereliction of duty or of disobedience of the rules of the Home have been recorded against them. Special passes are given for Sundays for those



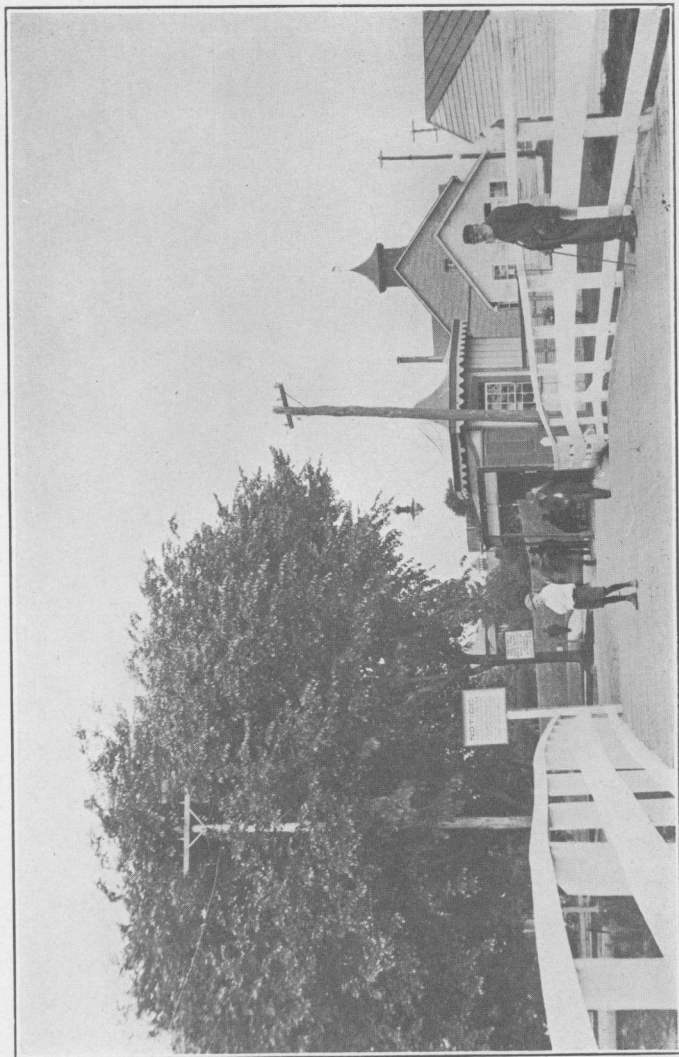
COLONEL THOMAS T. KNOX
Governor of Southern Branch . . . Appointed January 1, 1905

who wish to go outside for the purpose of attending church, and are from 10.30 a. m. until 9 p. m., or later.

The gates may be closed at any time by order of the Governor for special inspections by the Board of Managers, and inspectors from the War Department, also for one week immediately succeeding pension pay-day, in order to prevent as much as possible the members from squandering their money in the outside resorts. The beer-hall within the enclosure is open, where the members can purchase a better quality of beer than can be had outside. This gives them the opportunity of sending away a portion of their pension money by post-office order, or otherwise, to friends or relatives at home; this is done by a very large number.

Memorandum.—When the present Governor came to the Home, the branch regulations provided that the red card passes were not good on Sundays; that members who were tried a number of times would not be allowed their red cards at the expiration of the sentence, but after

a given number of trials would receive only two special passes a week; that members would have to have a good record for two years before receiving a pass good until 8.30 p. m. The present Governor ruled that red cards should be good seven days a week instead of six; that when a member had completed his sentence his red card should be given to him. The length of time before privileges were given was reduced and the regulations now provide that after being at the Home three months, to establish his record, if it is good at that time, the member is given privileges to 8.30 p. m., and if his record is good for six months, then he is given privileges to 11.30 p. m. All such men have privileges from 7 a. m. until 11.30 p. m. every day in the week, the gates being closed against such passes only when there is an inspection by an officer representing the War Department or the Board of Managers.



PHOEBUS GATE

CHAPTER V.

ENTRANCE TO THE HOME.

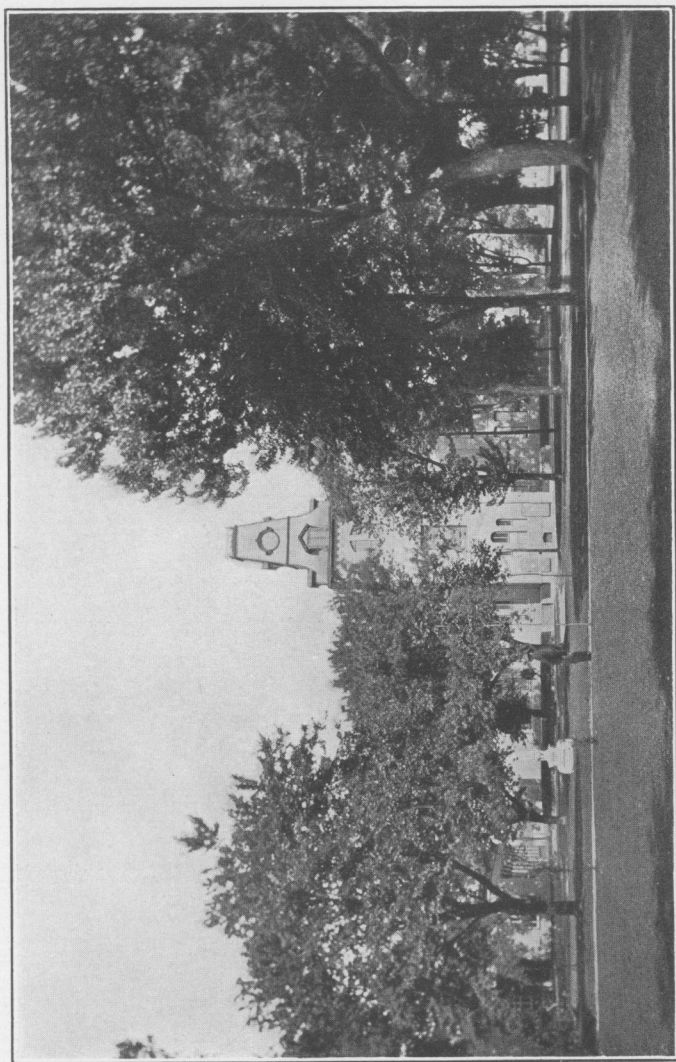
There are three entrances to the Home, one at the terminal of the trolley line in Phœbus, one called the main gate and one at the bridge on the road out to Hampton, past the Old National Cemetery. They are called gates, but are only poles, at each of which is located a guard box for the protection of the guards, who are to be found at their stations day and night.

In the opinion of the writer there appears to be one thing wanting to make an attractive entrance, viz., over each gate an arch, surmounted with an anchor, emblem of hope, and beneath it the word "welcome," and a suitable motto. Not that which was over the door of the Bastile in fair Paris during the reign of terror: "He who enters here leaves hope

behind;" but the anchor, blessed emblem of hope, and the word "welcome" to inspire the old soldier and sailor. For "hope must enter the hearts of all who enter here," when they realize what a generous provision the Government has made for them in their declining years, as but a partial reward for their services to their country during its darkest hours.

At the time the writer entered, the grounds were in summer verdure, the birds were singing their sweet carols in the trees, the plants and flowers were in full bloom, giving forth their fragrance and perfume, the walks of cement shaded by trees of endless variety and gorgeous appearance, and the salt sea air wafted across its lawns from the Bay.

At the guard-house I met with a kind and courteous inquiry as to my business, and when it was stated, a messenger was sent with me to headquarters, who ushered me into the adjutant's office. With a kind greeting I was asked my name and invited to a seat. A perfect system of records enabled a clerk to instantly



THE CAMPUS

place before the adjutant my application and letter of identification, which were found correct and to compare with my letter of notification. I was then sent by him, under escort of a messenger, to the hospital and ushered into the presence of the chief surgeon, who made the usual and accustomed examination, and asked me a few questions. I was then sent back to headquarters, and there assigned to a company, a messenger being sent with me who carried part of my baggage.

On reaching the barracks I was introduced to the captain of the company and turned over to the sergeant, who permitted me to make a selection from several vacant beds, and I was made to feel at home. I found an old acquaintance among those in the dormitory, and at once set up housekeeping, in sweeping around and making up my bed, after having been given clean sheets and a pillow case.

For several days I felt more like a guest than a member of the family, as all the others were dressed in the uniform of the Home, but on the

following Monday morning, the day set apart, I was taken by the sergeant to the Quartermaster's Department and supplied with my first issue of clothing, a brand-new fatigue suit. It consisted of blouse, vest, trousers, shoes, hat, cap, white gloves, shirts, drawers and socks, everything a person needs except neckwear and handkerchiefs. The first is not required for dress and the latter were formerly given, but many were so careless as to lose them and they were soon omitted. One need not draw the underwear but can use his own and have it laundered outside.

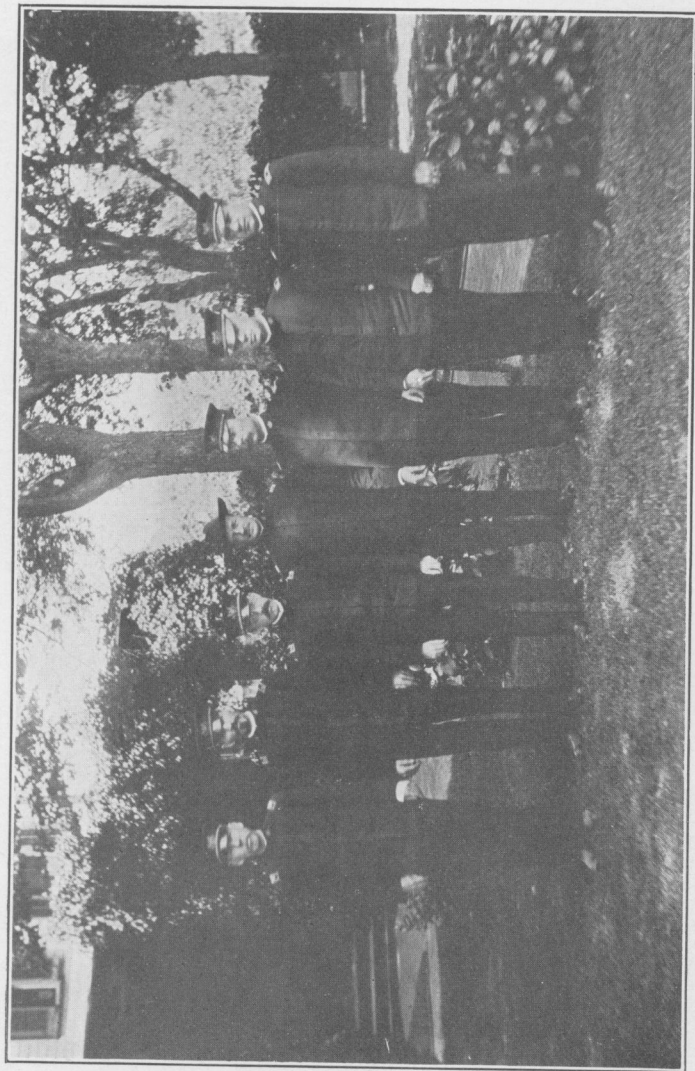
At the end of three months, an additional or second issue is made, consisting of a dress-coat, trousers, shirt, drawers, socks and shoes, so that a member has a full supply for all purposes; *i. e.*, a set of underwear upon his person, a set in the laundry and a set in his locker, ready for emergency. By this time a member is reminded somewhat of over forty years ago, he has a similar appetite to that of those days, and the bugle call of "Roast Beef" is a gentle though

welcome reminder that dinner is ready in the dining-room. Twenty minutes for dinner is allowed; bringing back forcibly to the writer's mind his experience on the road as a commercial traveler.

CHAPTER VI.

EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

The Governor is supreme in authority, executing the laws of Congress and carrying out the regulations prescribed by the Board of Managers, exercising wisdom in doing so that is highly commendable. He has entire charge of the internal management of the Home and of carrying out the regulations. In so doing he is held responsible for the discipline, and economy in the management of the finances of his Branch. He sits as a judge in trying all complaints touching infraction of the rules and regulations, and decides all cases brought before him. The trials are held in the guard-house, commencing at 8.30 o'clock each morning except Sunday. It is indeed amusing at times to listen to those who have been placed under arrest during the



THE GOVERNOR AND STAFF.

Colonel Thomas T. Knox, *Governor.*
Major John T. Hume, *Treasurer.*

Major J. A. Johnston, *Surgeon.*

Rev. J. Martyn Neifert, B.A., *Chaplain.*

Captain Luther M. Parker, *Adjutant and Inspector.*

Captain David C. Spencer, *Commissary of Subsistence.*

Captain Frank E. Skinner, *Quartermaster.*

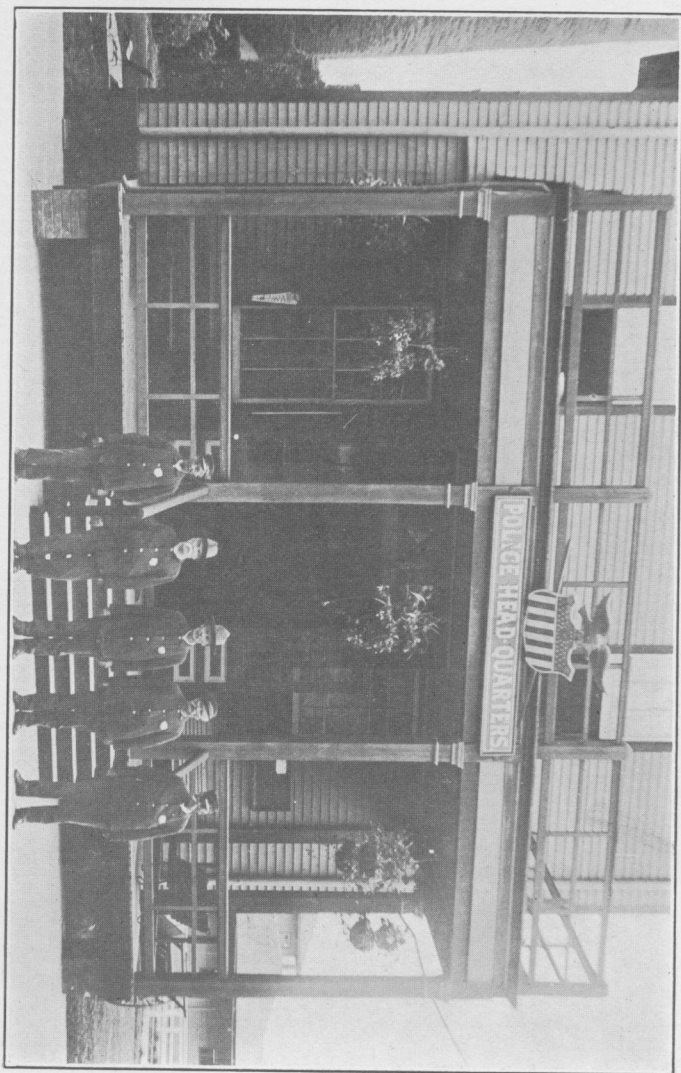
previous twenty-four hours, either by being sent in from the gates by the guards, or for disorder in the grounds or barracks. In the latter case the captain of the company files the complaint, but in the former case it is for infraction of the rules as to the time limit of passes, or inability to go it alone, caused by lingering too long in saloons and overindulgence of appetites.

There is not the assembling of both sexes as is the case in a Recorder's or Magistrate's court in our cities. Every person on trial is permitted to make his own defense and call witnesses to prove his innocence of the charge made against him (which however is seldom done), and he can appeal his case to the Board of Managers, if he thinks injustice has been done him.

The Governor exhibits the patience of Job, and the wisdom of Solomon in meting out justice, showing leniency for the first offence and increasing the punishment for each repetition. Most of the cases are the result of intoxication, and while the punishment is not severe

it involves being deprived of their liberty in so far as going outside the gates is concerned and being placed in the gang for the dump, *i. e.*, doing extra police duty; or it might be termed being placed in the White Wings. The hours required for even this punishment are few and the duty generally light, and dependent largely upon the condition of the grounds from storms, falling leaves, etc.

However, when a member is repeatedly brought before the Governor, the punishment is sometimes extended as far as ninety days within limits of the Home and sixty days police duty, with the hope of reforming the offender. He is deprived of part of his pension money, and can only draw such an amount monthly as in the wisdom of the Governor may be thought best, the balance remaining to his credit until such time as he may leave the Home or merit it by good behavior. This method enables a member to have something upon leaving, or to have money to go on furlough and he is thus not compelled to go away penniless. A member



THE POLICE STATION

may ask for his discharge at any time even while under sentence, or for a transfer to another Branch, but not while sentence is held over him. After its expiration his privilege card is restored to him.

In addition to the judicial care of the Home, the Governor has entire supervision of the store and news-stand and as to what shall be sold there. It is interesting to see the crowd gather when the daily papers arrive, for the old boys are eager for the news, and prefer to buy their own home paper to waiting their turns at the files in the Library, which are well supplied.

The purchase of supplies for the provisioning of the institution is always done by advertisement, and is given to the lowest bidder.

The Governor makes a careful inspection of every department of the Home every three months, giving special attention to the accounts of money handled by the Treasurer, also property of each and every kind, both perishable and imperishable, making a report annually to the

Board of Managers as required by the regulations.

He is responsible for all purchases conforming, as to quality and quantity, with the specifications of the contract. He is also responsible for the repairs and supplies needed to keep the Home at all times in good condition, and the most rigid economy is exercised to prevent waste in every way.

In case of any unusual occurrence having to do with the welfare of the Home, he reports the same at once to the Board.

THE ADJUTANT'S DEPARTMENT.

The Adjutant has charge of all records pertaining to admission, discharge, furloughs, passes, etc. In the safety vault in his office there is a large envelope for each and every member who has entered the Home from its beginning to the present time. In this envelope is the War record of each member from the date of his muster until his discharge, and all information pertaining to his disability, together



THE GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE

with his personal history during his stay at the Home. The Adjutant is a walking encyclopedia of information, and can tell you all that pertains to those who have come into the Home from its beginning. He is aided in his work by a corps of efficient clerks detailed from the various companies, and a Sergeant Major. The Adjutant assists the Governor in the preparation of all reports that have reference to the statistics of the Branch. All applicants first appear at his office either for admission or for re-admission. He makes up the case and then sends them before the Governor; he has charge of all correspondence pertaining thereto, also that with absent members, relating to discharges, furloughs, transfers, etc., etc. In fact all the business of the Home which has a bearing upon the coming and going of the members passes through his hands. In addition he must reply to many pathetic letters from wives and children enquiring after their loved ones who fail or neglect to write—or who may be sick in the hospital. In case of death they are im-

mediately notified by telegraph, as explained in Chapter XXIII. This is a sad duty at times, for in some cases the one enquired after has gone over the divide, having failed to notify of change of his address, so the message sent could not be delivered.

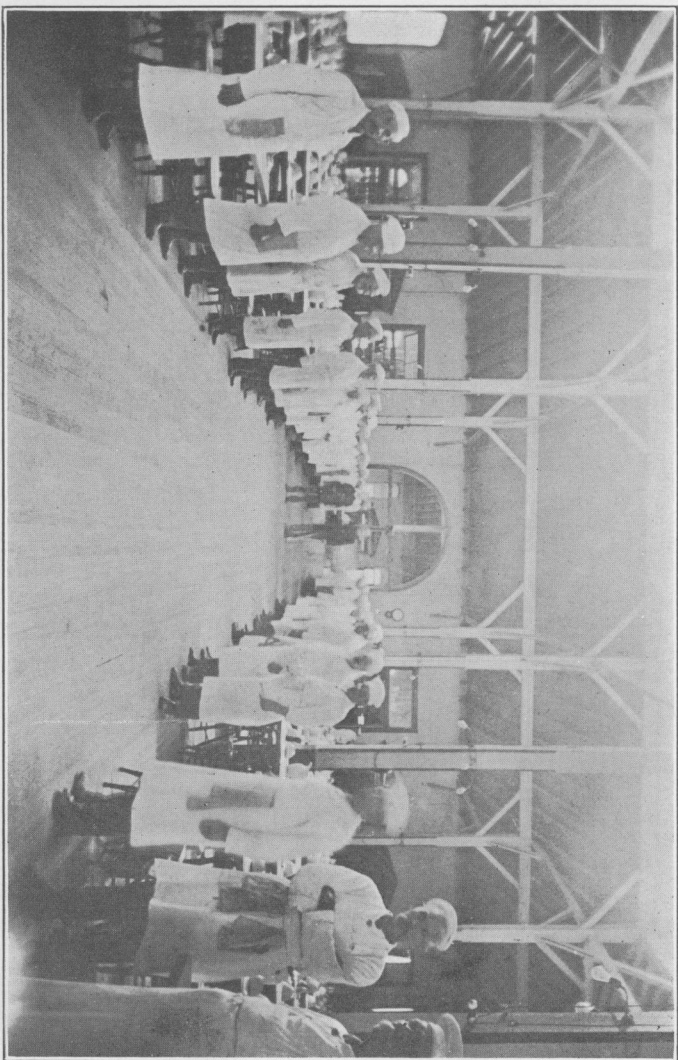
CHAPTER VII.

DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN.

The Dining Room has a seating capacity for 1,200 persons at one time, and is in charge of a Steward and Sergeant who are assisted by a corps of waiters detailed for that purpose from the several companies. They are dressed in white caps, aprons and jackets, and have charge of the tables, which are always kept neat and clean, being scoured and scrubbed after each meal. The tables are set with plates and pint bowls, silver-plated knives, forks and spoons, and everything pertaining to this department works like a well regulated clock. The bugle sounds a quarter of an hour before meal times, the hours for meals being 6 o'clock for breakfast, 12 for dinner and 5.30 for supper (5 p. m. on Sundays), the second table half an hour later during the early spring and summer months and half an hour earlier during the winter. It is indeed a pleasing sight to see the

old soldiers, at the sound of the first call, wending their way from all directions to the attractive point, the Mess Hall, and reminds one of the crowds in the great metropolis as they move towards the Brooklyn Bridge, Pennsylvania Railroad station, or the Reading Terminal in Philadelphia at the close of business hours. The bugle again sounds, the doors are thrown open, and at the sound of the gong they enter in order, every man wearing his coat even in the hottest weather and with his hat or cap off.

When they are seated, each one having his own seat, nothing on the table is touched until another sound of the gong, when the rattle of dishes begins. The tables are divided up into messes of six each, with food and coffee or tea for each of the six, who help themselves, and there is no standing on ceremony. There are separate tables for the cane men and the cripples, who are let into the dining room by themselves, five minutes before the meal is served, to avoid the rush. There are also separate tables for the colored company. It is wonderful that



MAIN DINING HALL

the task of washing all dishes and cutlery can be accomplished in ten minutes, the tables resupplied with food, and the members for the second table march in just half an hour from the first call. Twenty minutes is allowed for dinner, railroad dining-room time, and none go away hungry.

The kitchen is indeed a study from a sanitary point of view; the large tea and coffee urns shine brightly, the caldrons for cooking meats and vegetables are marvels of cleanliness, and are indeed a surprise to visitors, who go through this department daily, numbering sometimes nearly one hundred. All visitors are permitted to stand inside the dining room until the gong sounds, when they must promptly retire, many doing so reluctantly, their appetites undoubtedly being whetted in many cases from the aroma and odors arising from the tables, and only awaiting an invitation from the Sergeant to take a seat and help themselves. However, no visitors or other persons not members of the Home are permitted to eat at the mess-tables. Lady visitors

are frequently challenged to find anything of an uncleanly or an unsavory nature, and go away amazed, wishing their kitchen girls would come and take lessons and go and do likewise.

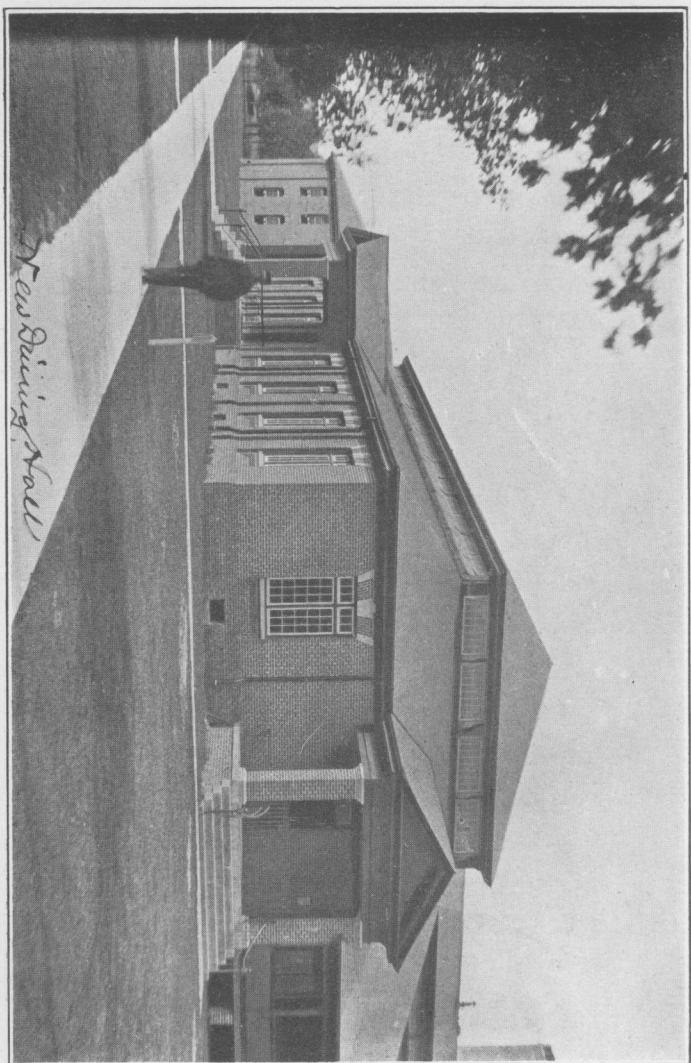
The food is of the very best and in good variety, every meal during the week being different, and on Fridays, in order to suit the conscience of those who eat no meat, choice No. 1 mackerel are provided for breakfast, and boiled codfish prepared with cream, or oysters for dinner. Friday's menu is as follows:

Breakfast: 250 No. 1 extra mackerel; 10 barrels potatoes; 2 barrels flour baked into excellent bread, with butter, coffee, etc.

Dinner: 250 gallons of oysters, or codfish; bread pudding, chow-chow, soda crackers; bread, butter, coffee, etc.

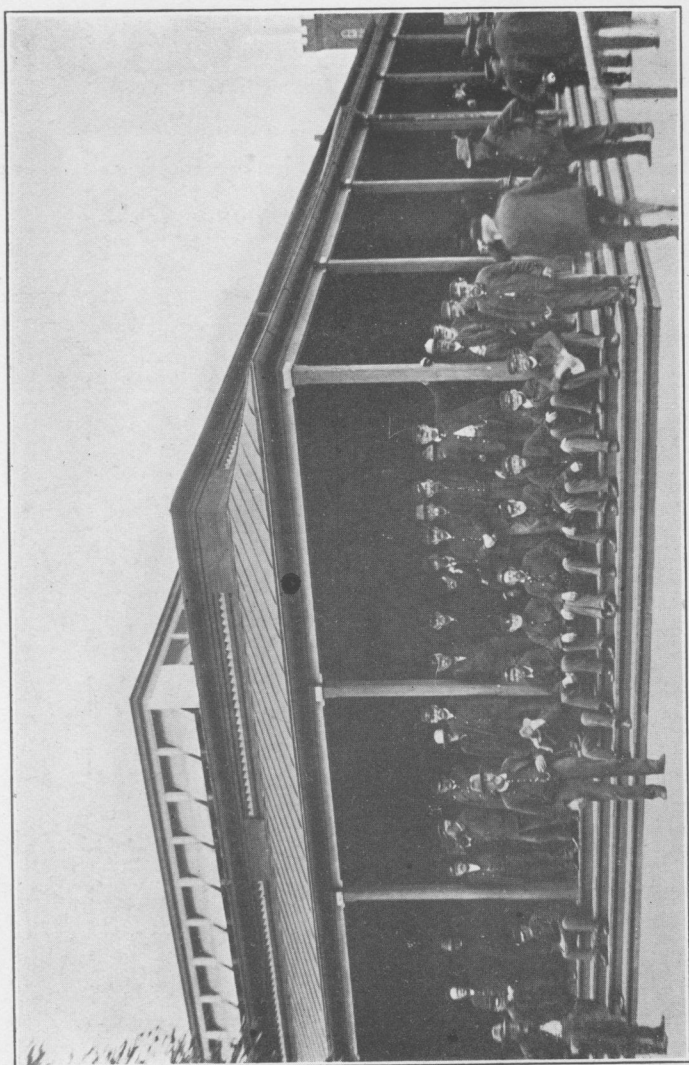
Supper: sweet buns, stewed prunes, cheese, butter, tea, etc.

The above was for 2,000 members; one and a half tons of grapes were used on a previous evening. At another supper, twelve barrels of first quality apples were consumed, dried



New Dining Hall

THE NEW DINING HALL



WAITING FOR DINNER

peaches, prunes, apples and cheese being furnished at other evening meals. Pot-roast beef, boiled ham, vegetable soup with beef, corned beef with cabbage, sauerkraut, etc., are among the articles of diet served during each week. Baked beans every Sunday morning with brown bread, cheese, sweet buns, corn bread and other articles such as bread pudding, rice pudding, cucumber pickles, etc., are included in the weekly bill of fare.

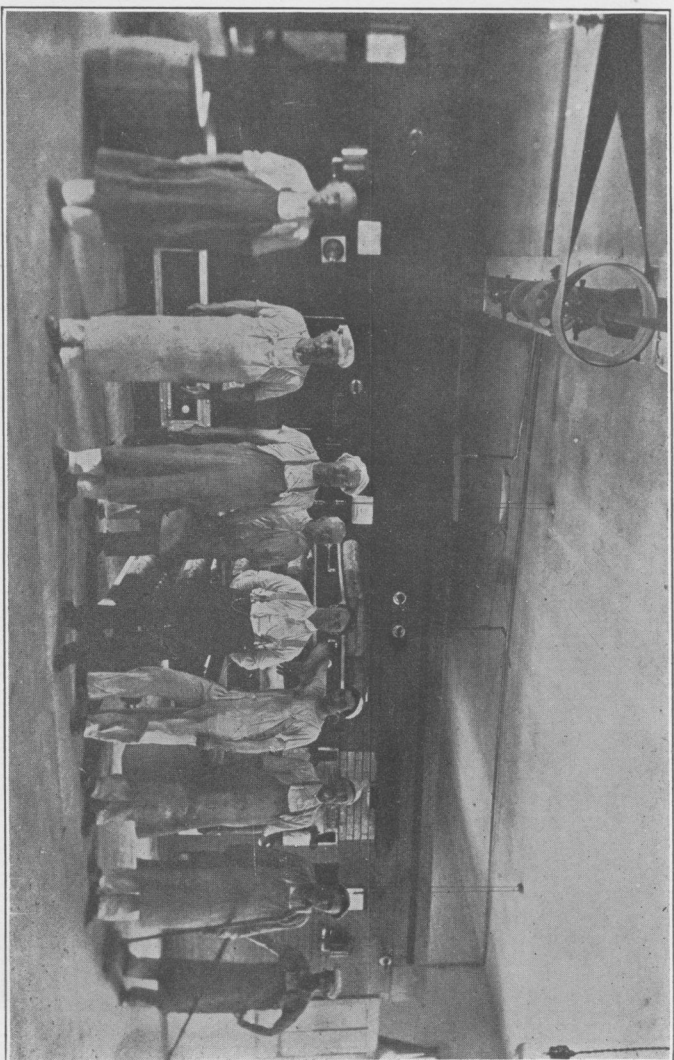
The basement of this building is devoted to the paring of potatoes, onions, etc., and the preparation of other vegetables to be used in making hash; all of which is done by members detailed from the several companies daily, and requires only about three quarters of an hour.

When the place is thoroughly cleaned, the task of peeling onions is the most dreaded, and many a tear is shed over the work, but, like other tears, are soon dried up. A mammoth chopping machine prepares the meat and vegetables for hash, when that article of diet is to be

for the next morning's breakfast. Some of our economical housewives would stand aghast at the thickness of the potato parings, but Uncle Sam is rich enough to stand the strain without splitting hairs, and the garbage man finds no fault.

Since the foregoing was written a machine has been installed for taking off the potato peelings. It consists of a revolving drum in which are placed clean gravel stones with the potatoes—thereby saving one-fifth in the loss—and the potatoes only need the eyes cut out after removal from the machine. All garbage is removed at once, a wagon waiting to receive it, and paying 25 cents a barrel for it.

Ladies are frequently invited to taste the food served in the Mess Hall to the members, and with the bracing salt air, which sharpens their appetites, they do not mince matters as they would at a swell dinner-party, but frequently go away with their hunger appeased, as they are wont to do in city department grocery stores after tasting everything in sight.



INTERIOR OF BAKERY

CHAPTER VIII.

BARRACKS AND QUARTERS.

SANITARY RULES.

There are comfortable quarters for the Companies from "A" to "O", and also for the Convalescent Company, and for employees in the various departments, some in the buildings where they are employed. There are 2,800 beds in all, fully equipped, embracing both those present and those absent on short furloughs, whose beds are retained for them.

When a member is admitted to the Home, he is assigned to quarters, and makes his selection from the vacant beds. If he is wise or has been posted by a friend or comrade, he will keep away from windows, and select a bed between them, for the double purpose of avoiding draughts, and to be excused from the task of keeping the window clean.

At 5.30 a. m., and one-half hour earlier in summer, when the bugle sounds, every man rises and throws back his bed clothes or hangs them on his chair for an airing. After breakfast each member sweeps around and makes up his bed and dusts off everything within his portion of the room. If crippled, he hires another member to do it for him, and usually engages one who draws no pension, as there are a number who have so far failed to conform to the pension laws. If he uses a cuspidore he is required to clean it in the lavatory every morning. His work is then ended for the day unless on special detail, and he comes and goes as he pleases. On Fridays every bed has to be scalded, abundance of hot water being on hand for the purpose. This particular feature of cleanliness is considered an important one and rigidly carried out, to prevent the appearance of that intolerable pest to all old sleepers, the bed-bug. It is indeed a very rare thing for one to be seen, the preventive being successful; each man also scrubs his floor space and his

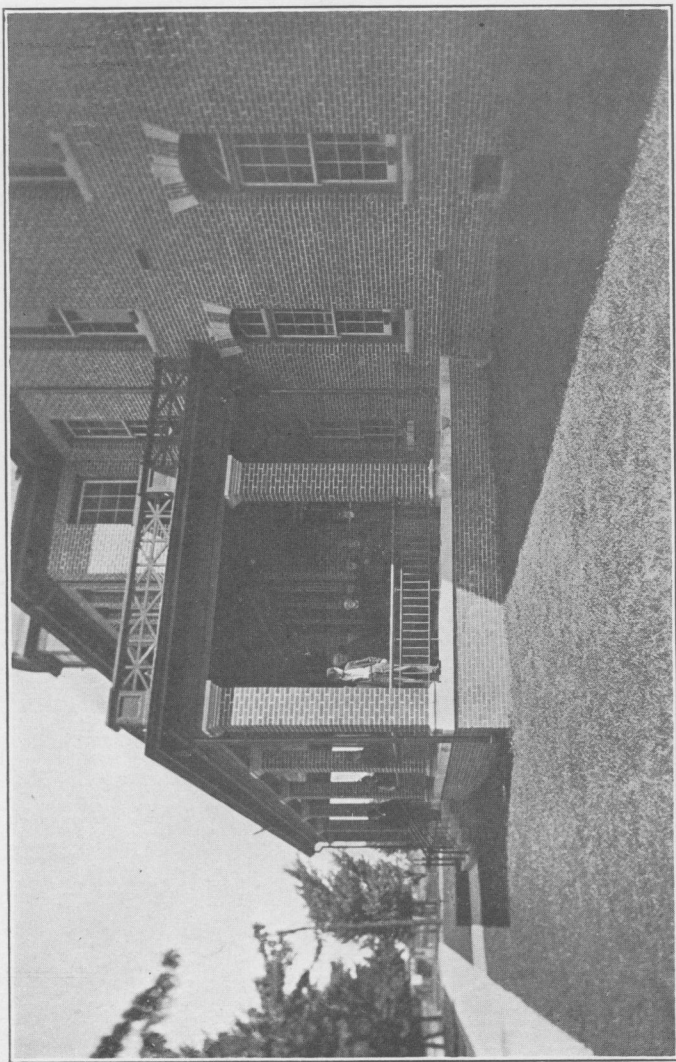
locker; detailed men wash down the painted walls, doors and transoms, and at the close of the day there is not a bed, or a particle of floor space, either occupied or vacant, that has not been gone over.

Every member is given clean bed linen weekly, consisting of sheet and pillow case, the top sheet placed on the mattress and clean one on top, the soiled ones being gathered up by a detail and taken to the Laundry. Every man is required to bathe once a week (and as many more times as he may wish), at this time he is required to change his underwear. On Saturdays he takes his soiled clothes to the Laundry and obtains those which he had left the week before, which usually consist of a shirt, socks, and a pair of cotton flannel drawers. Members are permitted to wear under-clothing and shirts other than those supplied by the Government, and are at liberty to have them laundered outside of the Home, no inconsiderable number adopting this plan.

The bath rooms are well fitted up with the

most modern plumbing in all of the recently constructed buildings, and the same sanitary plumbing is being placed in the older buildings. The wash rooms are up to date in their plumbing, and the lavatories are complete in every detail. In some of the bulidings they are flushed every minute by salt water drawn out of the bay by a system of pumps into tanks which hold sufficient water to last twenty-four hours in case of breakage of machinery.

Each room occupied by members for living purposes is in charge of an Orderly, a member of the company, whose duty it is to see that rules and regulations are carried out in every respect, and in case of infraction on the part of any member, he immediately reports to the Commander or Sergeant. Every member must be in quarters at 9 p. m., unless otherwise excused, and at taps, 9.30, lights are out and the boys are sleeping the sleep of the just and the innocent. In their dreams they may be charging the enemy, as in the eventful days of '61 to '65, or perchance talking to loved ones at



COMPANY C BARRACKS

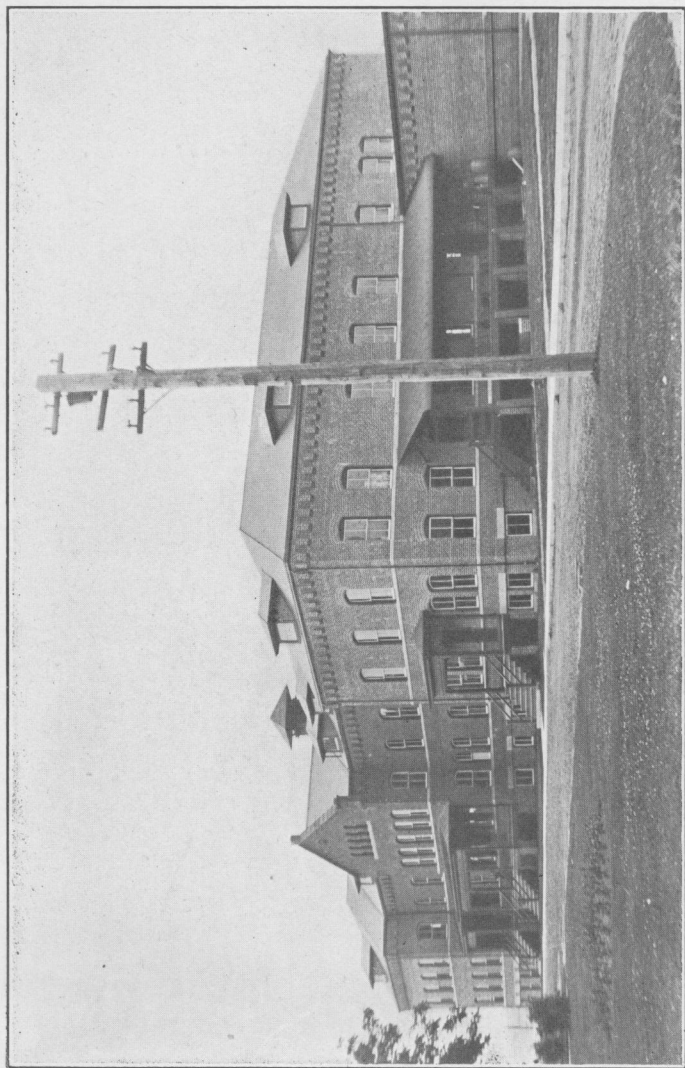
home, and may be dreaming of the better world beyond. The Bible is noticed on the lockers of many of the members, who can often be seen bending low over its sacred pages, and kneeling in silent prayer before retiring, with no one to molest them or make them afraid.

CHAPTER IX.

QUARTERMASTER'S DEPARTMENT

The rules and regulations of the army, in a modified form to suit conditions, are used in this department, as to suitability of clothing for use of the members and supplies for use in barracks, and for the various branches of repair work and maintenance.

No clothing is given or sold to members, but loaned for their use and issued to members on requisitions from company commanders, who are held responsible to this department for its care. When a veteran enters the Home, has been examined by the Surgeon and assigned to a company, he is taken to the Quartermaster's Department by the sergeant of the company and properly fitted out with the first issue. He is given entirely new clothing, which consists of blouse, vest, cap, hat, trousers, shoes, two pairs



QUARTERMASTER AND COMMISSARY BUILDING

of socks, two pairs of drawers, two shirts, one pair of suspenders and a pair of white gloves.

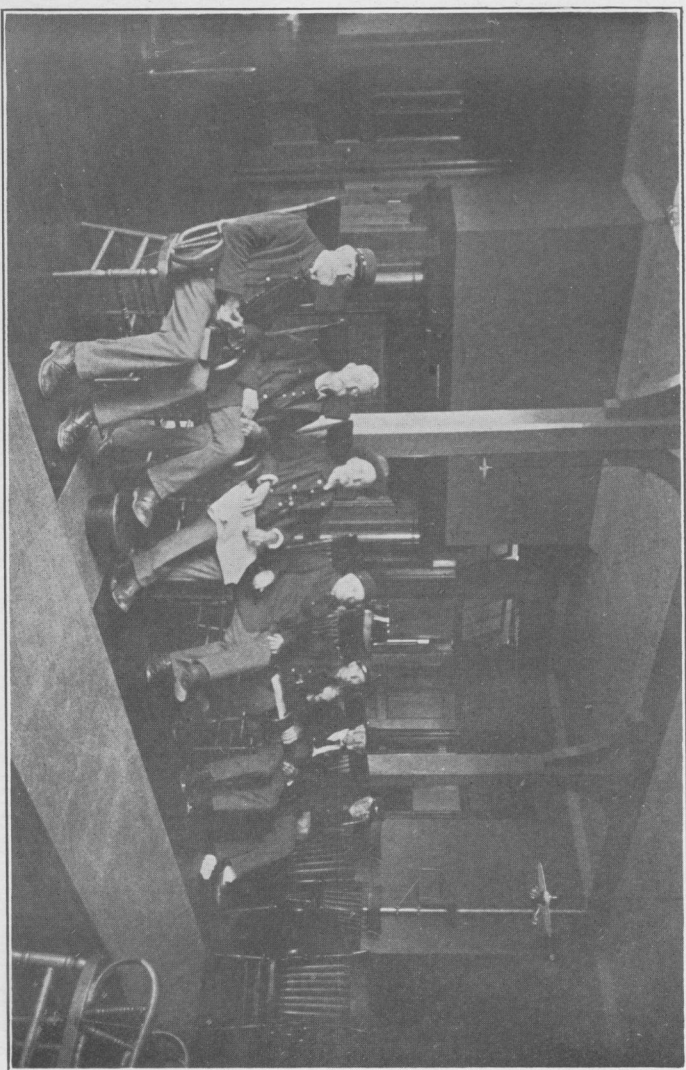
When he has been three months in the Home, a second issue is made consisting of one dress coat, one pair of trousers, one shirt, one pair of drawers, two pairs of socks, and another pair of shoes, so that he can have one change of underwear at the laundry, one set in his locker, and a suit on his person. The extra shoes and trousers being for use in case of getting wet or being in the shops for repairs.

When a member goes away on furlough his entire outfit is bundled up carefully and returned to the Quartermaster's Department, where it is kept for three months, after which time it is disinfected in a building used for this purpose. It is then scoured, repaired, and re-issued to members returning from furlough. There is no loss of clothing, and only when it is worn out is it exchanged for other clothing, and after being condemned as of no further use as such, is again issued for mop cloths and wash rags for cleaning purposes, or sold as old rags. A

closer economy could not obtain in the home of the most frugal housekeeper.

The same care and economy is used with all implements in barracks and shops. Old brooms are exchanged for new ones, and then issued for the sweeping of sidewalks, and the same care is exercised with every article used in all of the various departments.

An allowance of perishable supplies such as soap, blacking, lye, etc., is issued weekly to every company. This requisition is first carefully examined and approved, so that no more than what is actually necessary shall be issued, the quantity being based upon the size of the barracks and the number of members in the company.



Social Room, Company C.

CHAPTER X.

COMMISSARY DEPARTMENT: ITS BUILDING AND SUPPLIES.

This branch of the Home is under the control of the Quartermaster, and is indeed a marvel of completeness in all its various sections, resembling a large wholesale grocery. Every article received is carefully examined as to its purity, quality, etc., and must conform to the specifications of the contract. Issues are made on requisitions drawn by the Commissary in charge of the dining room, or the chief surgeon in charge of the hospital. Also to the hotel on the grounds, which is run for the benefit of the Home, while at the same time it serves as a place of entertainment for relatives and friends of members and others who come to visit them, either in the barracks or in the hospital.

An ice plant is in operation making an amount of ice sufficiently large to supply all buildings

within the enclosure, including a large quantity used in the hospital and morgue, the ice being made from distilled water only. Eight hundred and sixty-five tons of ice were produced during the year at a cost of seventy-six cents per ton.

There is also a large cold-storage room which is always full of the best beef and other meats, a separate apartment being provided for butter and such delicacies as are required for diet in the hospital.

A coffee roasting and grinding machine of the most improved style has been installed and is in successful operation daily; it has been found that when coffee is purchased green attempts at adulteration are prevented. The basement of the building is equipped with every convenience for handling stores, both heavy goods and vegetables. A track runs the full length of the basement by which supplies are distributed, such as barrels, and other heavy provisions, and placed directly in their proper places. A portion of this basement or cellar contains bins for potatoes, onions, cabbage, and

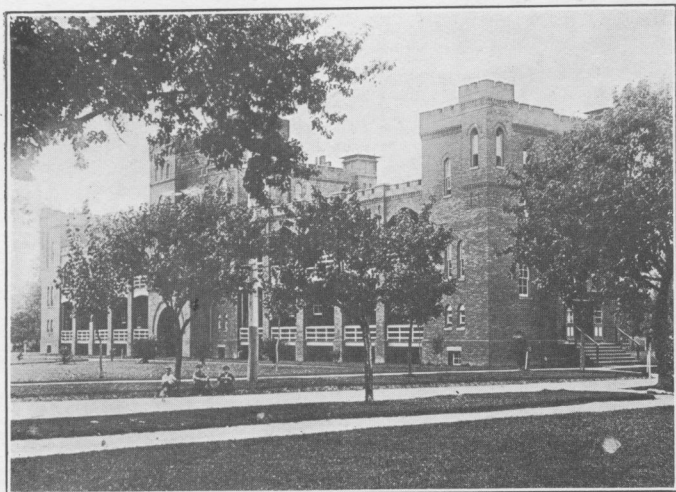
other vegetables; these bins are in size ten by twelve feet, and six feet in height.

A walk down to the wharf where supplies are landed by steamers from New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, gives opportunity to see the process of unloading, and upon going into the receiving warehouse we see, first, the following supplies: two barrels of whiskey six years old; one barrel of wood alcohol; cases of Apollinaris; all of which are for use in the hospital dispensary and drug department. Other articles of stores too numerous to mention meet the eye when examining this vast storehouse.

CHAPTER XI.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

This department is in charge of the treasurer, an experienced officer, who is assisted by a corps of clerks who are old veterans of the Home. The receipts and disbursements of all funds are controlled by him, including the General Fund and Post Fund, together with the Pension Fund and special funds. To show the perfection of the system used in handling this important fund, *i. e.*, the Pension Fund, it requires only about two hours to pay every pensioner in the Home. The rolls are prepared and sent to each company, the captain musters his men, who sign in duplicate, and they are then returned to the Treasurer. The Pension Agent at Washington remits the total amount in bulk, and the amount due each pensioner is placed in an envelope, properly briefed on the outside, and on the following day each company goes to the office,



COMPANY L BARRACKS



McCLELLAN AVENUE

and the work is completed without friction or confusion.

When a pensioner is away on furlough, having made the request on a blank form furnished, which after being duly executed is sent to the Treasurer, his pension money is forwarded to him. If the pensioner be present at the Home, and the arrangement has been made, one half of the pension is sent to the wife, or to any child or relative dependent upon him for support, or should the pensioner desire to draw only a portion of his quarterly pension, he can leave the balance in the hands of the Treasurer. This money he can draw at any future time, in the event of furlough, leaving the Home by discharge, or by transfer to another Home.

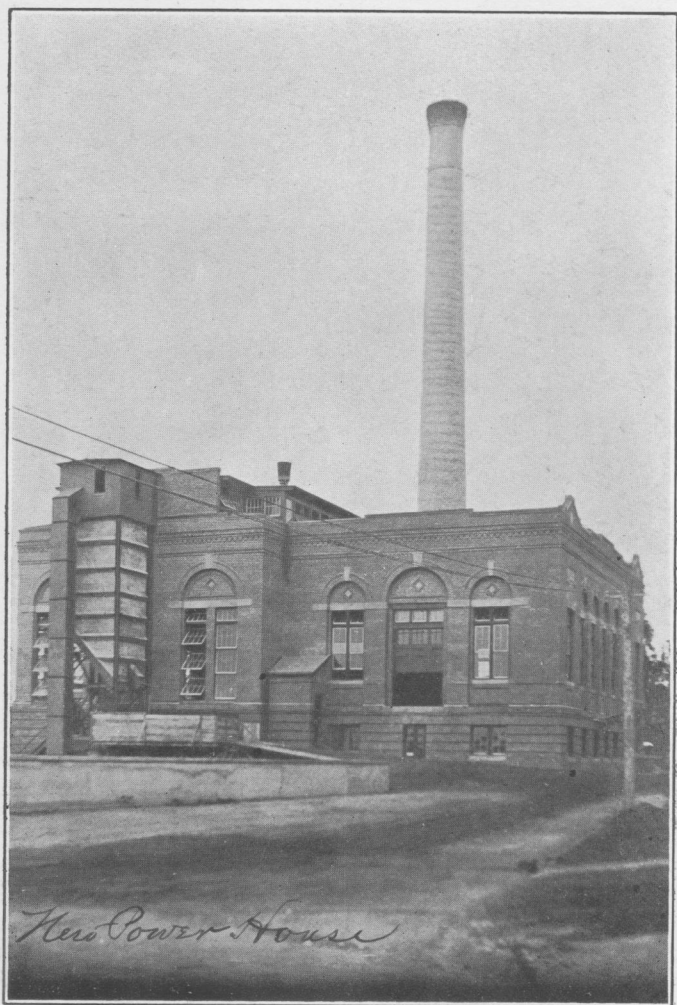
CHAPTER XII.

POWER HOUSE.

This building or plant stands almost in the centre of the grounds and furnishes steam for all the engines at the pumping stations, in the machine shops, laundry, and bakery, and supplies steam heat to every building on the grounds. It has a bank of seven horizontal, three locomotive type and five water-tube boilers; two of 200 horse-power each, eight of 150 horse-power each and five of 60 horse-power each, supplied by eight Worthington pumps and two hot feed pumps.

The engines are run day and night, including Sundays, all the engineers and firemen being experienced in their calling and old veterans of the Home; this force is divided into shifts, which makes it easy for them.

The large smoke stack, eighty feet in height, can be seen for a great distance, in this low lying



New Power House

THE NEW POWER HOUSE

country; it is symmetrical in appearance, and considered a masterpiece of workmanship.

There are 14,277 feet of pipes for steam and hot water, furnishing heat and hot water to every building on the grounds, in addition to 14,675 feet of cold water pipes, besides pipes for fire purposes.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAUNDRY.

This is a very interesting feature of the Home for visitors; all clothing and bed linen being washed here excepting such as belongs to patients in hospital and to the hospital proper; that institution having facilities for doing its own laundry work.

Each member is entitled to have three pieces laundered each week; a shirt, a pair of drawers and a pair of socks, and in necessary cases this allowance may be increased. The bed linen, one sheet and one pillow case, is changed once a week on every bed in the company on Saturday morning, and the soiled articles sent to the laundry on the same day.

The members may wash their private or civilian underwear any day in the week and dry it on lines prepared for that purpose, or it may be given out to persons outside who make

a business of doing this work for the members. The wash-women are not permitted to enter the barracks for this purpose, but send their husbands or a male friend for the clothing to be laundered, bringing the clean articles in at the same time. Numbers are supplied to each and every member of the Home, which are sewed on the several articles of clothing, and by a thorough and excellent system articles rarely ever go astray.

The toweling is also changed twice a day in every wash room, and sent to the laundry.

CHAPTER XIV.

MECHANICAL DEPARTMENTS.

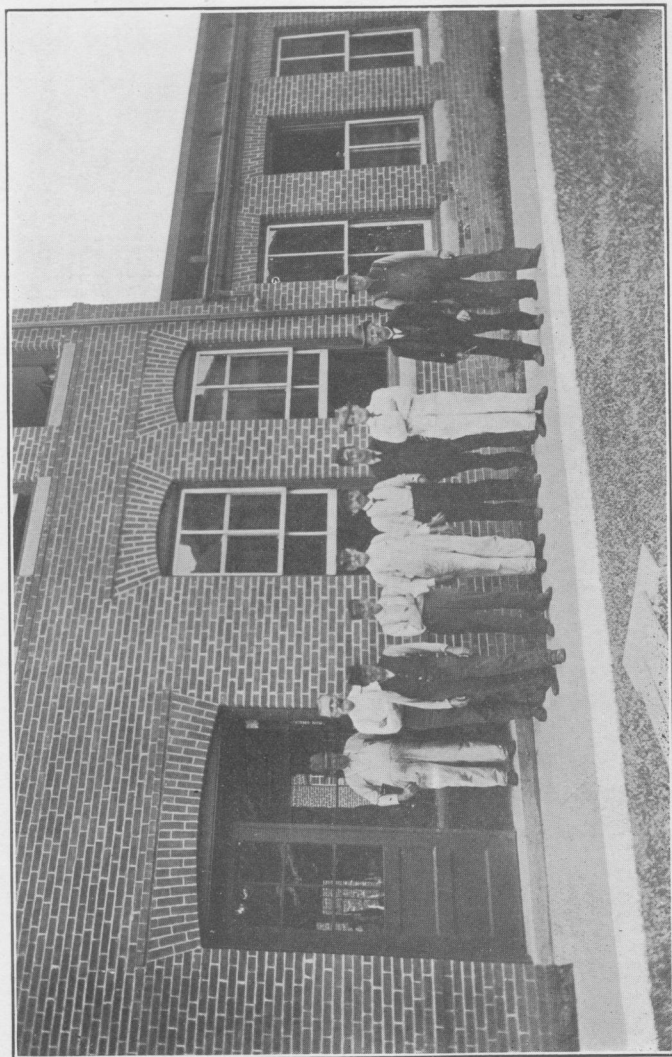
A machine shop, in charge of an experienced machinist or engineer, with able assistants who are detailed men, look after all repairs to machinery, steam fitting and plumbing; the shop is fully supplied with all the necessary supplies. Nothing is manufactured here, only small repairs that require immediate attention being done. Extensive repairs are let out by contract.

TIN SHOP.

In this shop are experienced mechanics who repair all roofs, spouting, etc., as well as all the tin-ware used in the kitchen and dining-room and in other departments.

CARPENTER SHOP.

A large number of men are detailed and



MACHINE SHOP

employed here, who are kept busy looking after the wood-work and repairs to same, also mending and repairing furniture in the barracks and hospital. An important feature of this work is the re-placing of the woven wire of the iron bedsteads, which rusts out rapidly from the continual washing with hot water done to guarantee absolute cleanliness in every part of the cots.

TAILOR SHOP.

This shop has been referred to in Chapter IX, incidentally, and is a bee-hive of industry. Many members are employed here in repairing clothing and making alterations.

Every two weeks a call is made in every barracks for those whose clothes need cleaning or mending, and it is surprising to see the large number going to the tailor. One can have his clothing pressed as often as he pleases.

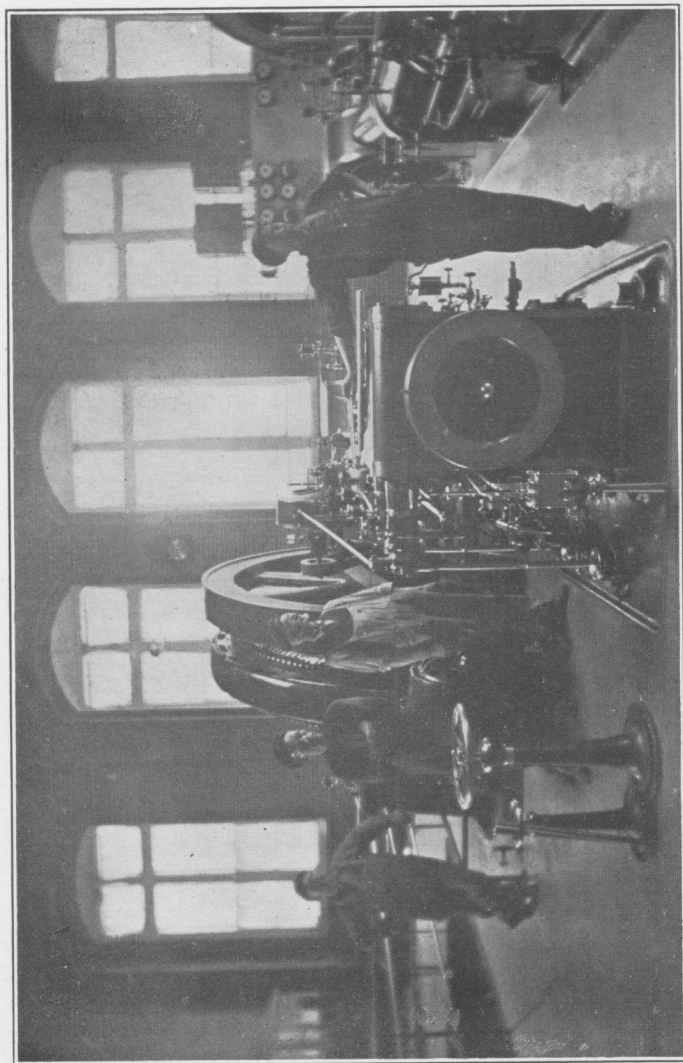
SHOE SHOP.

Is it any wonder that this shop should be a busy place, when so many have nothing else to do but walk about the grounds, and far into the

adjoining country, as well as on the pavements of Hampton, Phœbus, and even Newport News? As the highways are invariably covered with shells or broken stone, the foot gear of the old soldier wears out rapidly. The work in this shop, as in all other shops, is done by detailed men, members of the Home who are paid for their services, and work but eight hours per day. This department is truly a cobbler's shop, for repairs only are made to the shoes furnished by contractors, which are made in the very best manner and, as a rule, from excellent material. The men are not hurried in their work in any of the shops.

BARBER SHOP.

Here are to be found artists in their line of business, who can talk you to sleep and nearly to death. All subjects under the sun are taken up and exhausted with as much alacrity as the razor is wielded over the wrinkled and grizzled faces of the old boys. Many of them have to be awakened after the soothing balm has been



ELECTRIC GENERATORS IN THE POWER HOUSE

applied, and the echo of that familiar word "NEXT" has been sounded by the "talking and shaving machine," as he gracefully winds himself up for an attack on "next."

The colored company is provided with a shop separate from the main barber shop.

CHAPTER XV.

PRINTING OFFICE.

The composing and type-setting room is in charge of an expert foreman with a number of assistants, equipped with a full line of type, and other material. There are also foot presses large enough to do all the local work of the Home, such as printing general and special orders, programmes for music for the Sunday afternoon concerts, and for entertainments in the theatre, and such other job work as may be required.

All of the regular blanks used, however, are furnished from headquarters, Board of Managers.

BOOK BINDERY.

This work is in charge of an expert workman (for it takes an expert to make a new book out of an old one), who is kept busy at this kind of work, and such other work as is required by the Adjutant's Office, such as binding the monthly reports, etc., and work of the other departments.

CHAPTER XVI.

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

While the United States Government, under the direction of the Governor, provides everything we need for our comfort and to make us happy and contented, it does not forget to throw around us every safe-guard against that worst of all enemies, fire. The boys could stand the fire on battlefields or in conflicts at sea, but it would be quite another thing to face a fire or escape from one in our barracks, so everything is provided for our protection and safety.

The main building, hospital and theatre are provided with fire escapes as are some of the barracks where it is thought they are needed. Every building is liberally supplied with portable fire extinguishers, hose and pipe on each floor, and a full supply of fire-buckets, always filled and covered. Fire axes are placed in all buildings in readiness for immediate use, but

more important than all in this regard is a fully equipped fire department. There is an engine house centrally located in which is a hook and ladder truck with ladders and other apparatus. Two hose carriages with 1,500 feet of hose, and two double cylinder chemical fire extinguishers on wheels with 300 feet of hose on each of the reels, complete the equipment.

A captain and his men are stationed at the engine house day and night, having their sleeping quarters in the second story, and are on permanent detail. They are chosen as far as possible from old firemen who have had experience in that line of duty in our largest cities, and in addition, there is a large corps of reserves in every company, whose duty it is to respond to any and all alarms irrespective of what they may be doing at the time. Test alarms are given at times when least expected in order to prove their efficient working. The force is in charge of a chief engineer, who knows how to fight the fire, should that dire calamity occur. Singularly indeed, there has never been an occasion to



W. C. IDAIL
Chief Engineer.

prove the efficiency of this body of men, which speaks volumes for the care and watchfulness of the officers of the several companies, where smoking is so continuously indulged in. Force pipes are in the larger buildings, such as hospital, theatre, etc., with hose attached and ready for use. The apparatus is tested regularly and can always be relied upon for action, as well as the men who handle it.

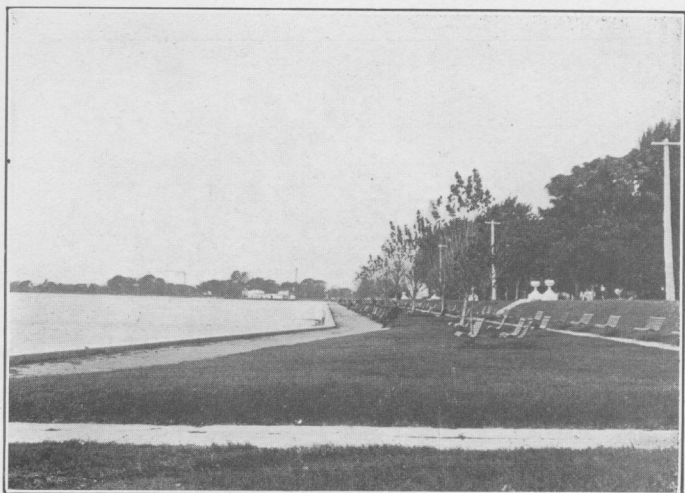
The writer is an exempt member of the New York Fire Department and foreman of one of the three companies to first use a steam fire engine, and knows whereof he writes on this subject.

Note.—Since this was written a large fire occurred in the kitchen of the dining hall, from crossed electric light wires, but was well managed and only partially destroyed that part of the building. It occurred in the night, but was extinguished with as much skill as would have been the case in one of our large cities.

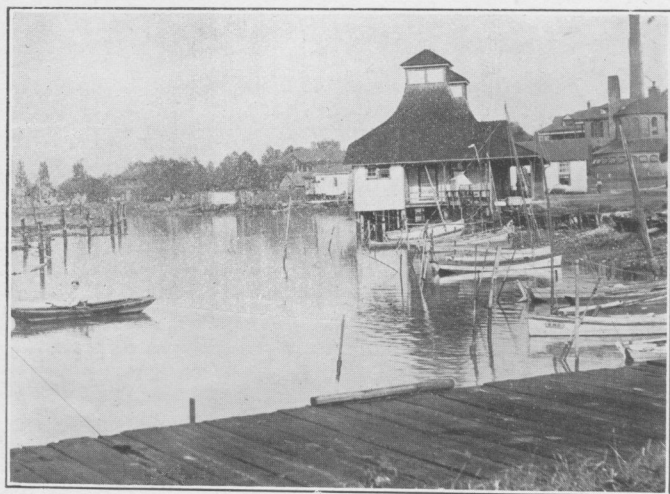
CHAPTER XVII.

BEER HALL AND POST EXCHANGE.

Sad to say, the beer hall is more attractive to a large number of the members than either the library or reading room, and in popularity is only excelled by the dining room, to which they are drawn three times a day only. At the former place, however, at all hours of the day, from the time it opens in the morning until its close, many can be found who make use of the opportunity to quench their thirst, and whilst doing so talk over battles fought in the early sixties, and other topics. Occasionally one may be seen who has lingered too long at the overflowing glass, but as soon as discovered by the eagle eye of the superintendent or his assistants, neither his money nor his tickets are good for the balance of the day. The rules and regulations established by the Board of Managers, and added to by the Governor to suit the conditions at the Home, are strictly carried out and any member disobeying



THE ESPLANADE, FRONTING BAY



BEER HALL (NOW EXTINCT)

them is punished by the withdrawal of the privileges, or restricted to a certain number of glasses per day. In addition, he gives up his red card pass, and is assigned to police duty for such time as the Governor may deem proper, which is regulated by the number of times the offender has been previously brought to the guard-house.

The all important question of temperance, which agitates all classes of society, has been the vexed question with the Board of Managers for years, and at a meeting of the Board, held August 27, 1904, the following resolutions were adopted:

1. That temperance is to be taught and encouraged at all times.
2. No member visibly under the influence of intoxicants shall be admitted to the beer halls.
3. The beer halls shall not be opened before breakfast, and shall be closed between the hours of twelve to one o'clock, noon, and closed for the day one-half hour before supper.
4. But one ticket shall be sold to any member at any one time.

5. Governors of Branches may limit the amount of beer to be sold to any one member, and may make special arrangements for members employed in shops or in any other capacity.

Note.—Of course it is hardly necessary to say that all buildings are closed on Sunday, except the Adjutant's Office, and that also after morning reports have been received from the various commands and details made for the following day.

The quality of beer is of the best, and the glasses are large. On pension day and for a week afterward the place is crowded; the men standing in long lines such as may be seen at the Post Office and the oft-heard order in battle, "fire and fall back," is changed to "*Drink and fall back* for your next turn." The lame and feeble have the privilege of drinking their beer seated around small tables, and the scene sometimes reminds one of the German beer garden, with the women and children left out. Indeed it would be so much better if their thirst was appeased here, but as soon as the gates are opened they flock to the town outside, and there

drink the vile stuff sold by the saloons of Phœbus. The writer does not wish to criticise the acts of the law makers, the Congress of the United States, and while he is a prohibitionist himself, his optic views, studies and impressions convince him that it would be far better for the Government to permit a good quality of whiskey to be sold in the Home, at the same price for which they buy five-cent rats in the vile dens outside. Even if there were no profits in the transaction for the post or amusement fund resulting, there would at least be longer lives for some of the old men, and the records of the hospital will bear out the assertion, for those who crave whiskey will have it and they will resort to any and every means to get it. After any pension day the effects may be plainly seen in the increased number admitted for medical treatment, and further than that, by the greater number of deaths. "*Of the two evils choose the least*"; give them good liquor inside and they will not seek the dens and brothels outside.

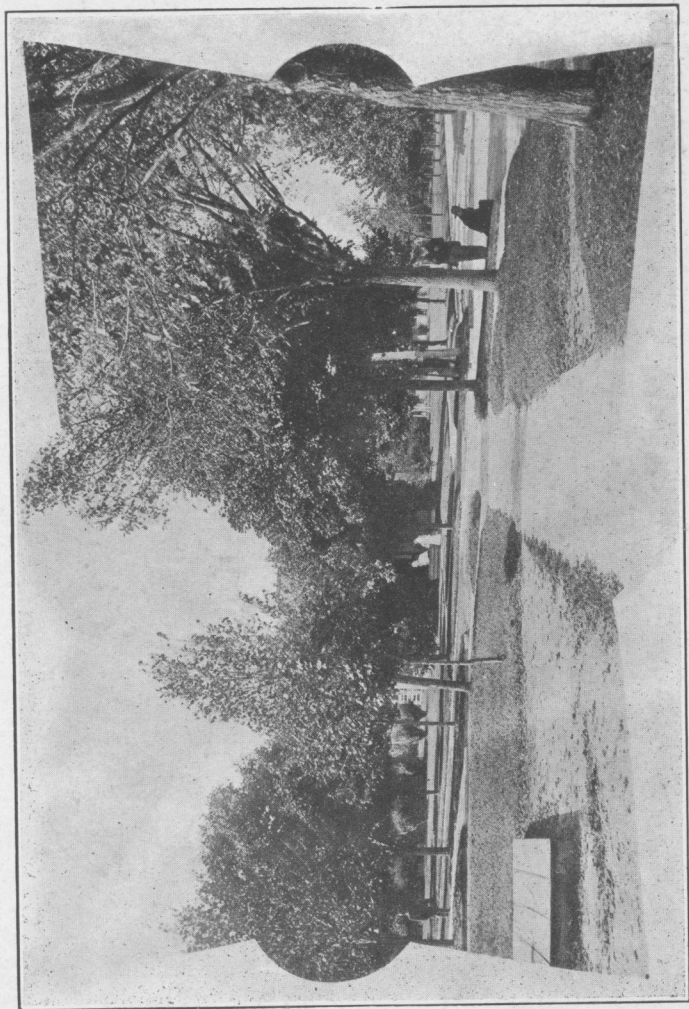
CHAPTER XVIII.

WAYS AND MEANS.

It is surprising to see the spirit for money-getting here, and the ways resorted to to earn an honest penny—no trust-busting schemes, promoters of misery, or corporations.

The sign standing over the archway of the Tithing House at Salt Lake—Bee Hive,—would be suitable here, for if there is a will there seems always to be a way to earn a little money (although the demand for labor in the various departments gives employment to about 500 persons, who draw pay for their services), enough to keep the members in spending money, without having to work very hard for it.

Some are fishermen, others catch crabs and dig oysters, clams, etc., while others do tailoring, repairing civilian clothes and fixing them up for furlough. Indeed it is very noticeable that the old men like to look their best before starting



VIEW NEAR THE HOSPITAL

on the home visit. "Umbrellas to mend" is not chanted out in that very uncertain and questionable voice, yet an old member has a well equipped stand at the main building, and when a long spell of fair weather makes the umbrella business somewhat dull, he amuses himself working on canes. In passing through a barracks a locksmith has his kit laid out on his bed, is engaged in repairing the locks on grip-sack, but he will not wear diamonds from the profits of his business here, locks not being allowed on the lockers, and an instance of pilfering is rarely known as a spirit of honesty seems to enter into the very lives of the veterans of all classes.

Then there is a commission merchant who goes around selling old clothes—a sort of go-between for comers and goers. A comrade comes in with a good civilian suit which he has no use for while here, and perchance wants money for other purposes. He straightway seeks the commission merchant and strikes a bargain with him, as he probably has a pros-

pective purchaser in some one about to visit home and friends by means of furlough. So the buyer with his pension money and possibly other funds saved and earned, starts for home and loved ones with a strange suit upon his back, which in after months or years may in turn suit other cases.

A watchmaker helps us to keep the time, although the bugler never misses his calls, and every call is familiar to all; from the morning call at 5.30, "I can't get 'em up, I can't get 'em up; I can't get 'em up in the morning," to taps and extinguishing of all lights, the veterans know the music to the minute and the hour.

Quite a number of the members are employed outside, who eat and sleep inside, while others who have families in Phœbus or Hampton have what is known as "sleep-out passes," and work in various ways within the Home. It may readily be seen that the Government helps us to help ourselves, and thereby removes every thought of mendicancy in coming to the Home. When the sad day comes, as it will to all of us,

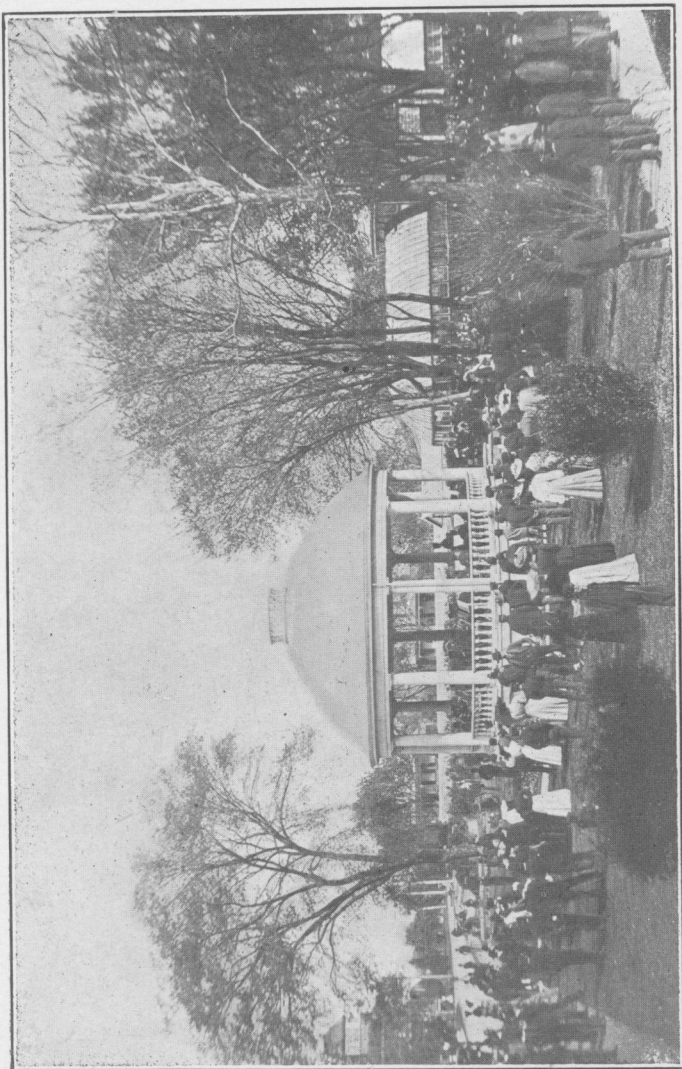
when we cannot help ourselves, we have here a Home where we can have everything done for us, and when no more can be done to prolong our lives, we are kindly laid away to rest to await the bugle blast of the Archangel. He will have no occasion to sound the call of the bugler here to arise in the morning, but that call will echo through the realms of space; then even the nameless dead buried in crooked trenches, as well as those resting in the quiet cities of the dead at Soldiers' Homes and National Cemeteries shall hear and obey, and arise to assemble with their loved ones in the haven of rest.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BAND.

“Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast,” is an old and a trite saying, and has its daily exemplification here, for in summer the old men in large numbers may be seen gathered around the band stand when the band is playing the regular concerts. During the winter season, concerts are held every Sunday evening for an hour in the theatre. The corps of musicians, with their excellent leader, are kept busy attending funerals almost every day of the week; all are men of experience in their profession, many of them having played in the best bands of the country for years, and some even have had experience in their work in foreign countries.

They practice regularly in their quarters, located some distance from the other buildings of the Home, and it is indeed a quaint and cosy



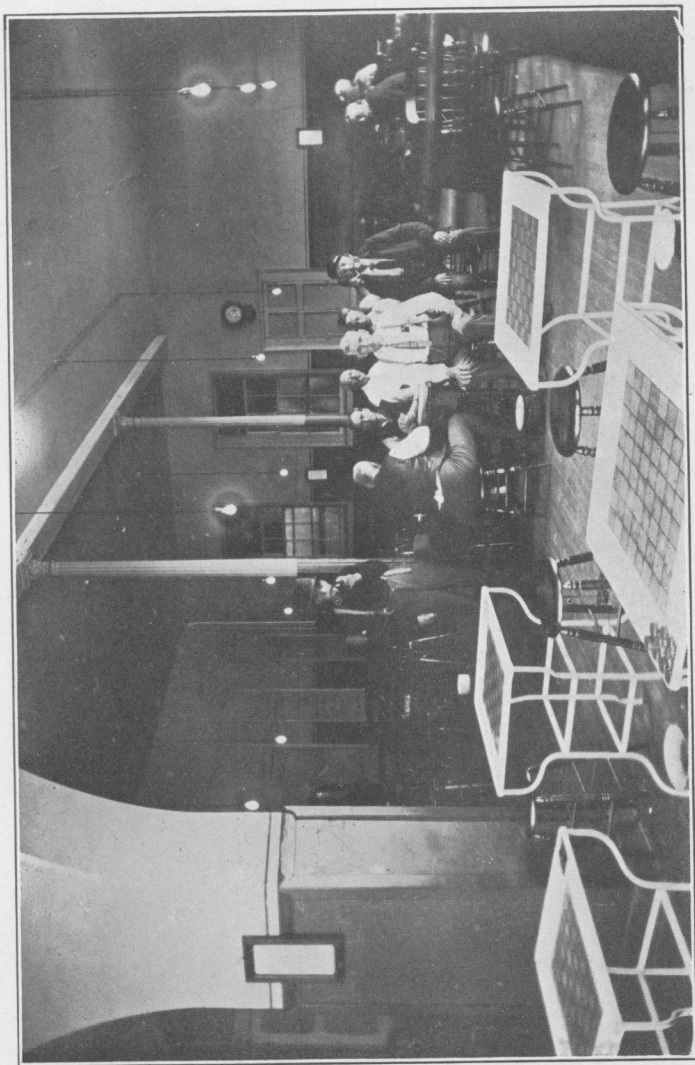
A SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT

place for these dreamy, romantic people, whose efforts are given over to the entertainment of the Home members, while at the same time they are enjoying a repose, mingled with soul secrets and tragedies which only a true lover of myth, music and melody can appreciate.

Too much cannot be said in commendation of this body of men, for their playing is indeed one of the most lovely features of the Home, from the open-air concerts on Sabbath afternoons, their music in the theatre while the talented ones perform, down to the last call; when taps are sounded, and "earth to earth" in solemn tones is said.

The music of the Home band is enjoyed by many people not connected with the Home, the officers and soldiers of Fortress Monroe, the throng of workmen engaged at Newport News; the students of African extraction, and from the Indian reservations, who compose the great Normal School, being irresistibly drawn from their various occupations and studies to listen to the sweet music. The country lads and

lassies drive in for miles around and those from the towns and villages consider the Home concerts as one of the features of life,—all are welcome, the only requirement being good order and respectful deportment.



CARD AND CHECKER ROOM

CHAPTER XX.

AMUSEMENTS.

Much has been done by the Government and by the Governor to provide every way and means possible with expediency, to cheer the hearts of the members in their loneliness, away from their families, friends and acquaintances. Among the various attractions are:

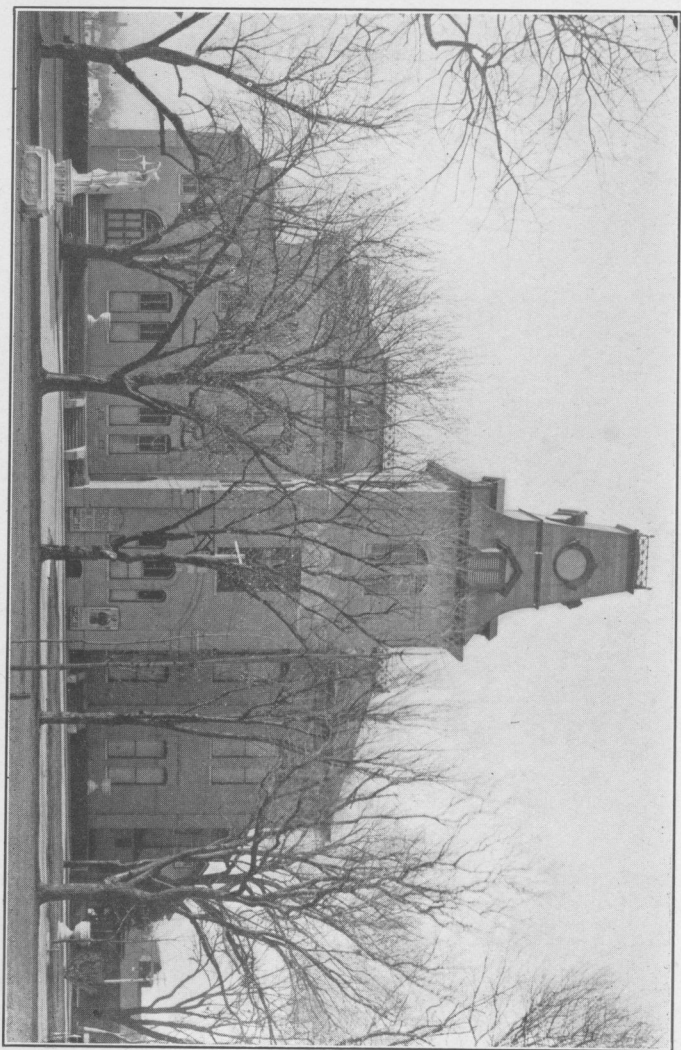
THE THEATRE.

This building, constructed expressly for the purpose, was erected in 1881 with a part of one hundred thousand dollars left by General ————Ward, by will, to be used in providing amusements for the old soldiers, and is called the "Ward Memorial Theatre." It has a seating capacity of 1,400, and is constructed with a parquet and two galleries, also dress circle and balcony seats, and three private boxes on each side of the stage, which is furnished with a com-

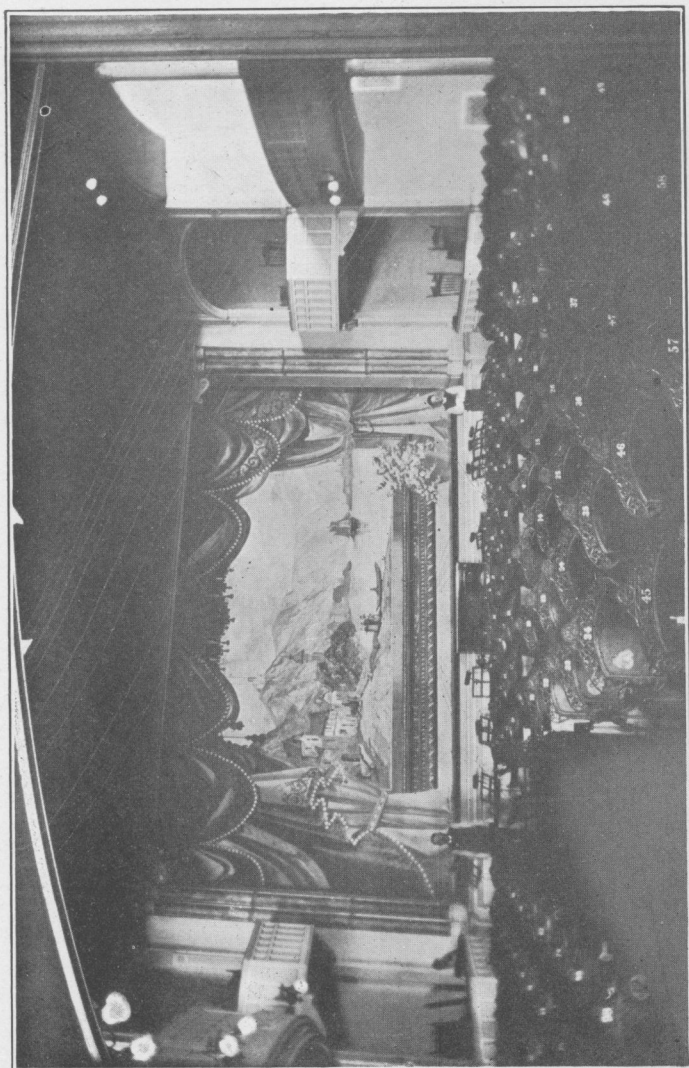
plete set of scenery, and other appurtenances including a drop curtain, one of asbestos, and complete electrical outfit.

The stage is seventy-two feet by twenty-seven feet deep and large enough for all ordinary purposes. Opportunities are given regularly during the theatrical season for traveling troops and stars to place upon the boards the best they have, before as critical an audience as can be found in the largest cities, and among whom can be found many who have been first nighters and regular attendants at plays presented by Forrest, Booth, Jefferson, and others of talent. The leading professionals who appear here appreciate this fact, and anxiously look for encores, dreading any cool reception as they would in our largest cities.

The liberal provision made by the Governor invariably ensures crowded houses, as many of the people from adjoining towns and cities are regular attendants, as well as the officers and soldiers from the nearby fortifications at Old Point. This dispels that uniformity of dress



WARD MEMORIAL THEATRE



INTERIOR OF THEATRE

which would be the case if only members of the Home were in attendance; for the beauty and dress of the Virginia belles, with that of the officers' wives and families here at the Home, can hardly be excelled.

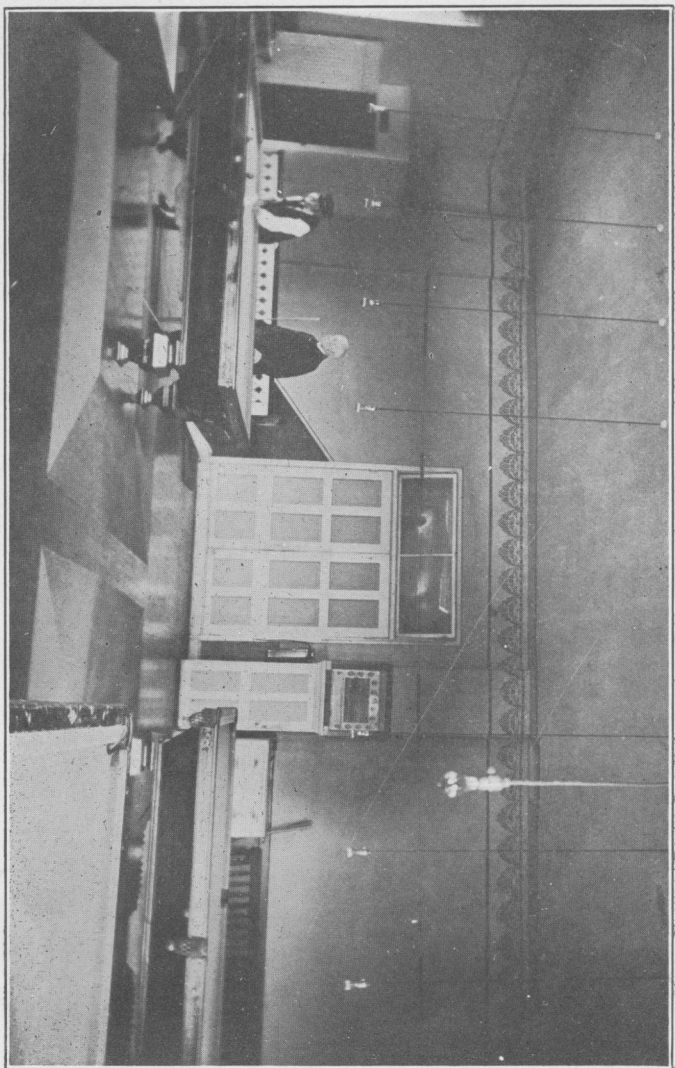
The admission is free to the old veterans and the cost of the entertainment is paid for out of the amusement fund supported by the profits from the hotel, beer-hall, store, news-stand, and ice-cream parlors. An admission fee is required of all not members of the Home. Veterans are detailed in charge of the building as managers, ushers, electricians, engineers, and others such as are usually found behind the curtain. As a reward for good conduct only those who are not under sentence for misdemeanors are given tickets of admission, and all members of the Home such as non-commissioned officers, and men on detail who receive pay for their services, are charged a very small fee for reserved seats, should they wish to occupy them. If not, other seats are free to them.

Note.—Since writing the above, the Victor

Talking Machine Company has generously donated one of their best machines, for use in the Chapel, and to amuse the old vets in the theatre. With the machine came music that cheers and brings back remembrances of '61 to '65, such as "Marching through Georgia," "The Star Spangled Banner" and other patriotic airs as well as ragtime songs and dances. It would do the hearts of the President and staff of the Victor Company good if they could hear the jolly laughs and encores given to the music so generously furnished by them.

BILLIARD AND POOL ROOM.

A large hall in which are two billiard and two pool tables, with a full equipment of cues and balls and other appliances pertaining thereto, is provided, where many members pass pleasant hours. On the lower floor of the building is a card, chess and checker room, equipped with comfortable chairs and attractive tables. All classes of players gather there, from the novice to the expert; no betting or stakes are allowed,



BILLIARD HALL.

the penalty for breaking this rule would be severe and in fact the severest imposed by the regulations.

A room is set apart in this building, furnished with tables, pens, ink, paper, etc., as a writing room, in which at all times absolute quiet and exceptional order are required. Could these tables reveal secrets, what burning tears, what expressions of love and regret, what joys and sorrows might be brought from their inanimate rappings; letters to the dear old wife, girl of '61-'65; fond words to an aged mother, and cheering thoughts expressed as in days of yore, to grandchildren, and others who still hold a tender cord in the breast of the veteran.

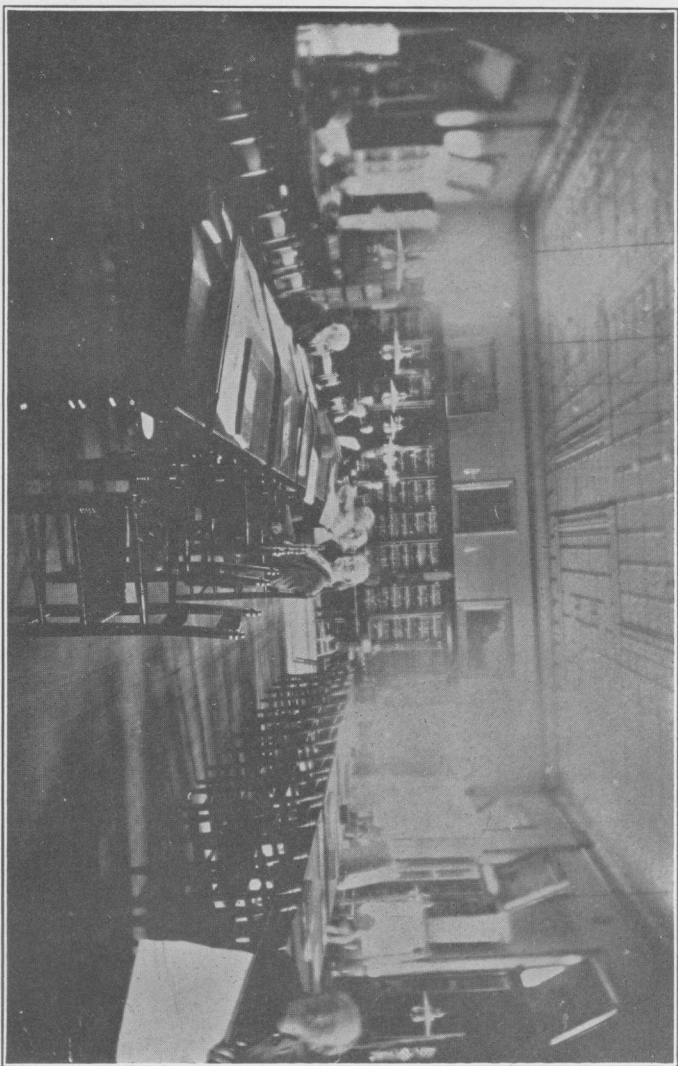
THE LIBRARY.

This room is supplied with the leading papers of the various states of the Union, religious weeklies, and monthly magazines; upon its shelves are about 8,000 volumes, which are constantly being added to by purchase, donation, etc. The veterans can be found at all hours of

the day and evening bending over some book or paper, drinking in the current literature of the day, the news columns, and other intellectual matter according to their tastes, to be later talked over in the shade of the trees along the water front, in the barracks or elsewhere. They can also take books to their quarters, which is largely done.

It is truly astonishing to listen to their graphic descriptions of important events, their intellectual discussions of events of moment in the past as well as of the present. Science, art, and in short, almost any problem of the day has its turn, and as for military science, the great game of war, it would seem that Grant, Wellington or Napoleon were indeed far behind in their calling as compared with the ideas of some of these old men.

The management of the Home comes in for a goodly share of criticism, along with great questions of government and state. At the sound of the bugle, "Roast Beef Call," discussions end, and all make a bee line for the



LIBRARY

dining room where, to use the words of our mothers, the children discuss no questions, nor do any talking, but let the food stop their mouths for a time.

BOATING, FISHING AND CRABBING.

Many of the old veterans own their boats, some of which are naphtha launches, and the attractions of the calm surface of the broad expanse of water in the Roads are thoroughly enjoyed by many, some being experts, not only in fishing and crabbing, but also in handling their boats. The supply of fish, crabs, oysters, clams, etc., seems inexhaustible and affords many a substantial meal, as a change from the regular menu of the Home. Indeed many of the old boys make this a regular business, selling to comrades what they do not want, and in this way some have accumulated quite a bank account by their industry and economy.

Note.—The writer has his own boat (eighteen feet long with deck fore and aft, and a six foot cockpit in which is a fish well) carrying

130 feet of canvas, and has spent many an hour after leaving his desk in the Adjutant's Office, fishing and sailing in Chesapeake Bay and Hampton Roads (all fish stories omitted).

LODGE ROOM AND SOCIAL CLUB.

Some years ago a building was erected within the enclosure as a "Keely Cure," and there are in the Home to-day evidences of its good results in the form of permanent cures. However, so few availed themselves of its opportunities together with its restraints and expense, that it was soon abandoned and the building changed in the interior, and made suitable for lodge purposes. Here the several Posts of the G. A. R., the Veteran Legion, and other patriotic organizations permitted in the Home, regularly hold their meetings. The lower floor is fitted up with reading-room, billiard and pool rooms, which are used by members of a club made up of congenial spirits, and whose members are chosen by ballot. The expense of running the

club is met by a small initiation fee and yearly dues.

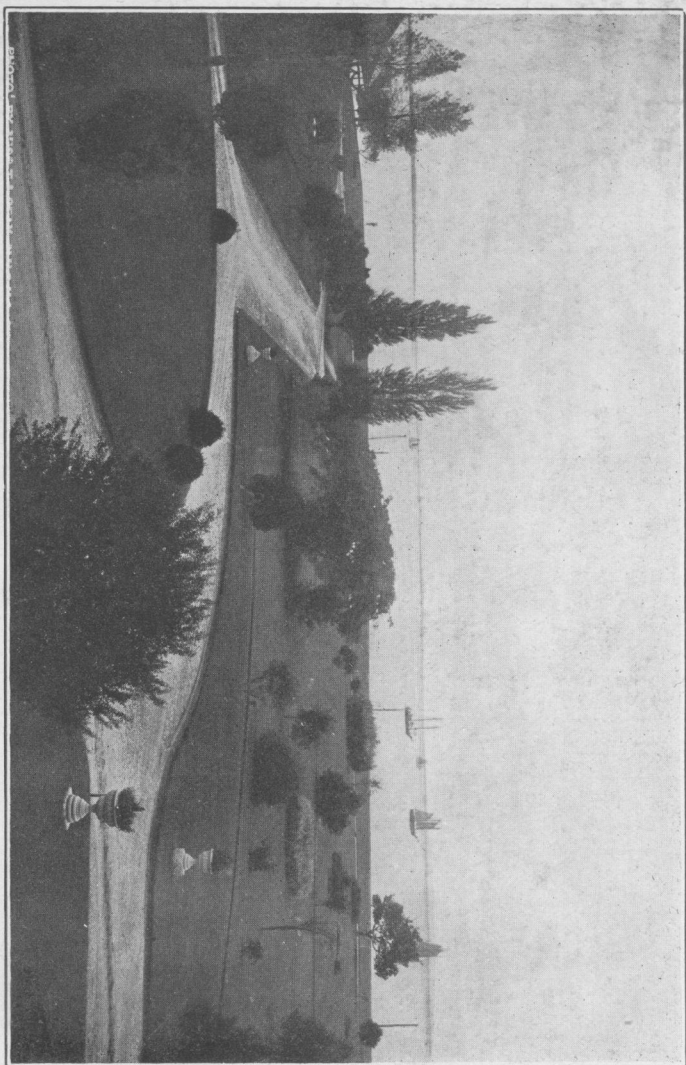
BALL GROUND.

A large lawn near the main gate is set aside for outdoor sports, not, however, indulged in by the "old sports," they merely forming the on-looking throng. Baseball and football teams from the young fellows at the Fort, civilian clubs from the towns and country around, as well as clubs from our fighting machines steaming in and out of the Harbor, or lying like mammoth sleeping beauties in the offing, play on this ground. These games are enjoyed regularly by large numbers of ladies from Phœbus, Hampton, Newport News, etc. A nominal charge for admission is made to all outsiders at the three gates of entrance, but there is no charge for members of the Home.

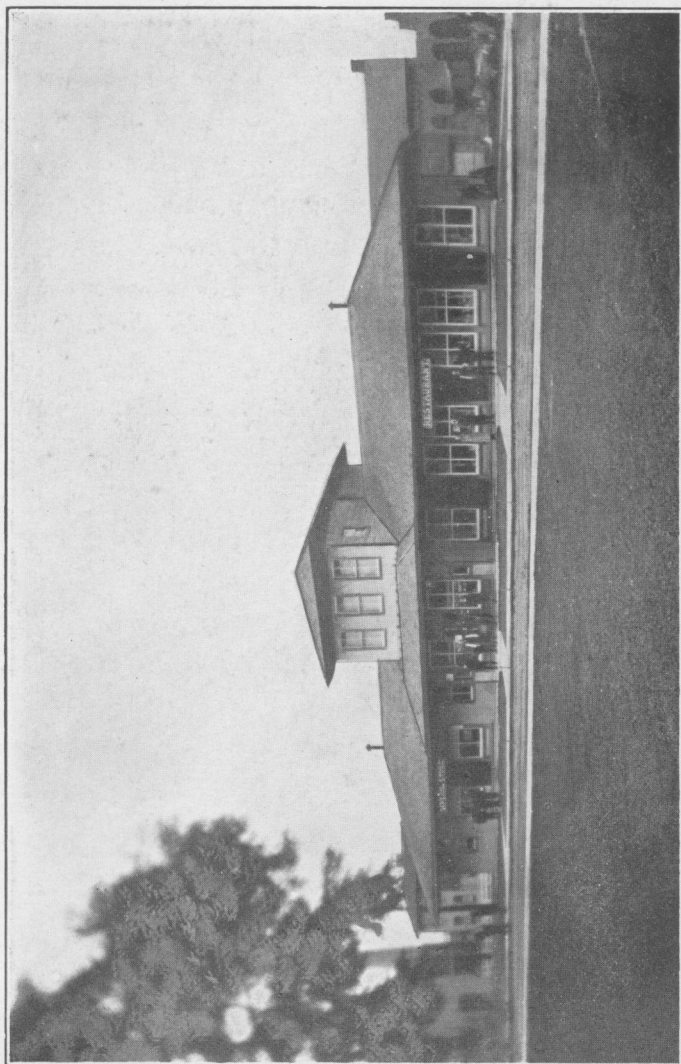
SALT WATER BATHS.

A covered structure on the wharf opposite the Normal School is fitted up for this purpose and is liberally patronized during the bathing

season. The space under this building is enclosed to keep out floating sea-weed and other matter and the bathing ground is perfectly safe even for such as cannot swim, not being over six feet deep at flood tide. Many of the old soldiers find much enjoyment in the summer season sporting in the salt water; it relieves their rheumatic pains, makes them feel young again, and it has resulted in permanent cures in many cases.



VIEW OF HAMPTON ROADS



STORE, NEWS-STAND AND RESTAURANT

CHAPTER XXI.

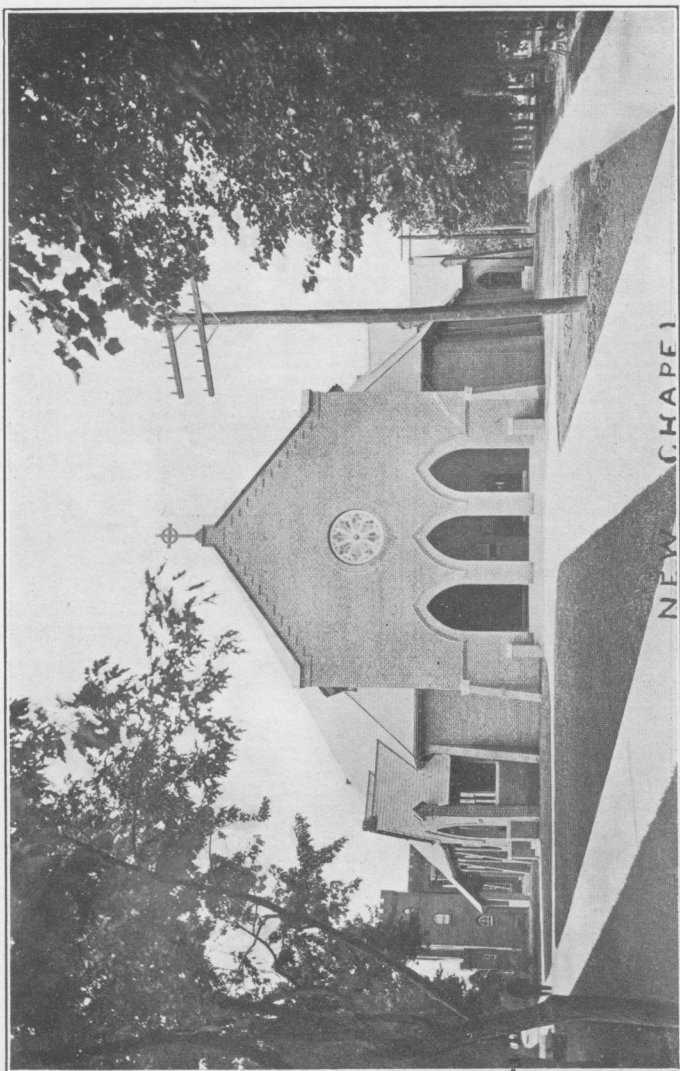
STORE, RESTAURANT, AND NEWS STAND.

The store is in charge of polite and obliging clerks, chosen from members of the Home, and ready at all times to wait on visitors and members. It is well stocked with such articles as the members may want, from a needle to a cuspidor. A full line of gentlemen's furnishings is kept in stock, but the principal business is in tobacco, cigars and smokers' articles, the sale of which exceeds that of many stores in the cities, a large majority here being smokers and chewers of tobacco. The visitor will find many souvenirs from which to make a selection. Prices are as low as in the stores of nearby cities, and while there is no competition, cut prices or mark-down sales, selling out at cost, etc., many articles can be had lower than elsewhere, as business is done strictly for cash.

The restaurant is in charge of a soldier's

widow and her two daughters, who are ever ready to supply hot coffee, chocolate, tea and milk, with pies and cakes and a variety of canned goods, confectionery, ice-cream, etc. It is well patronized by the old veterans and their friends who visit them. These two places are under the direction of the officers of the Home, the profits from them going into the Post Fund, as do those from the hotel and beer hall; from this the expenses for amusements, band, etc., are paid.

The news-stand is supplied with the daily papers from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore Washington and other places, as well as a goodly assortment of monthly magazines, picture postal cards and photos of scenes in and around the Home. Although the stand is rented out to a member of the Home it is under the control of the Governor, and officers of his staff.



THE NEW CHAPEL

CHAPTER XXII.

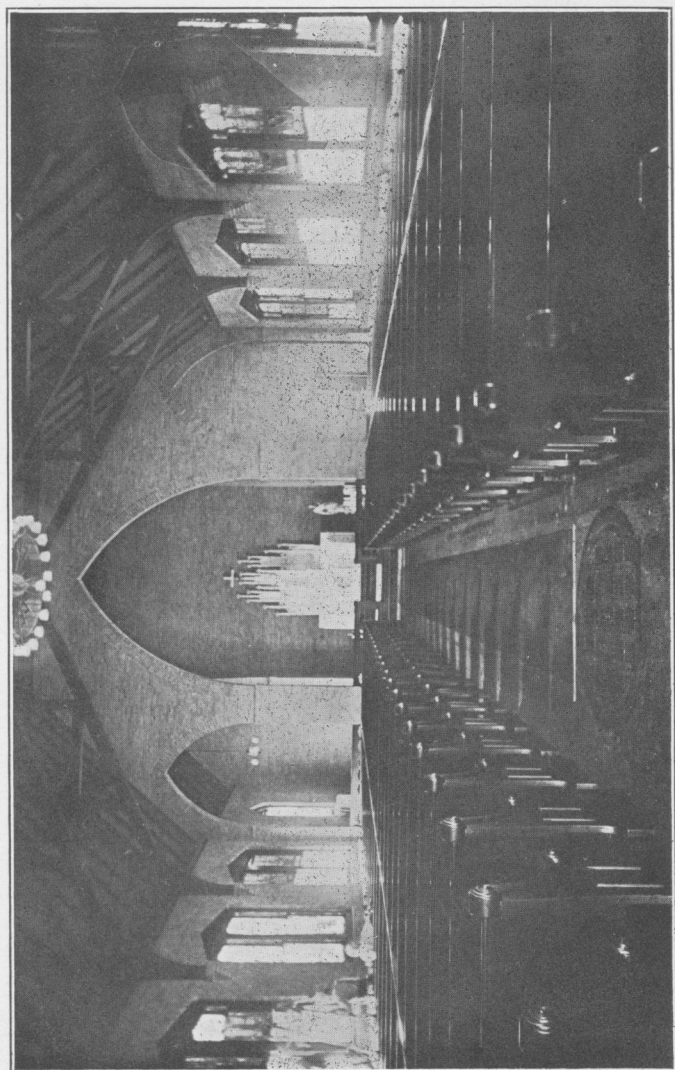
THE CHAPEL.

Around this modest building, centrally situated in the grounds, are clustered memories of those who have gone in and out from the services held regularly by the Chaplain of the Home, or the priest who looks after the spiritual needs of those of his faith. It is not a place where the young and joyous gather to carry on their courtship, or to criticise each others apparel; but one where the last sad rites are said and where silent tears are shed by old and true friends, whose attachments formed here are only broken by the last summons.

Sometimes she, the partner of his life, who has shared his joys and sorrows for so many years; she who stood at the cottage door, watching and waving that fond adieu amid smiles and tears, in '61 and '62; watching and weeping as the years roll by, then kneeling in prayer on his

return, on being informed by wire of the death of him she loved, has knelt here in this little chapel in the Soldiers' Home. What sacred, tender memories cluster around its every feature; the brother, the son, the grandchildren, the loving sister, and others who in life held the memory of the veteran dear to their hearts, who though absent from them, was ever present in their thoughts; these have gathered here to commit the departed soul to the keeping of the Great Commander. A eulogy is delivered by the chaplain in words of feeling shaken by memories of deeds of valor on many a battlefield, his daring and doing for country and home and to preserve the Union of States for all time.

Services are held here every Sabbath by the Chaplain of the Home, also by a priest of the Roman Catholic faith from Phœbus, mass being said in the morning. Services are also held here weekly in the evening during the entire year in the form of a sermon on Wednesday night by the regular chaplain to the veteran branch of the Christian Temperance Union



CATHOLIC WING OF CHAPEL

which is presided over by Mrs. Bradley, the wife of the veteran chaplain. There is in addition a well organized branch of the Christian Endeavor.

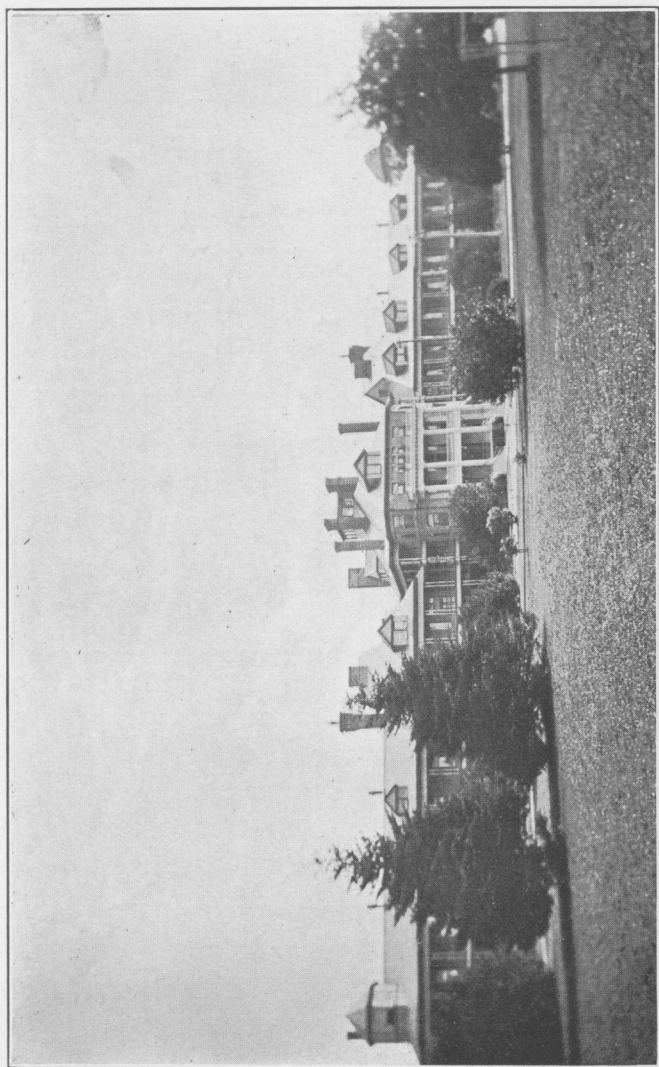
These meetings are all well attended by the old men, as well as by the younger men from the fort at Old Point and citizens from outside who are interested in these meetings. A Bible Class meets every Sunday afternoon, and is well attended.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE HOSPITAL.

One of the largest buildings on the grounds of the Home is the hospital, which is in charge of a surgeon-in-chief, with a corps of assistant surgeons.

Trained female nurses (the only members of the fair sex employed here, except laundresses, scrub-women and officers' nurses) are assisted by a force of men who are detailed from the members of the Home to act as assistant nurses in all its various departments. The building being of recent date, the latest and most sanitary plumbing arrangements are fitted throughout; the relatives and friends of the members who are compelled by old age or disease, such as comes to all of us, may rest assured that all that can be done to prolong the lives, and ameliorate suffering and pain, is done for the old veterans here.



FRONT VIEW OF THE HOSPITAL

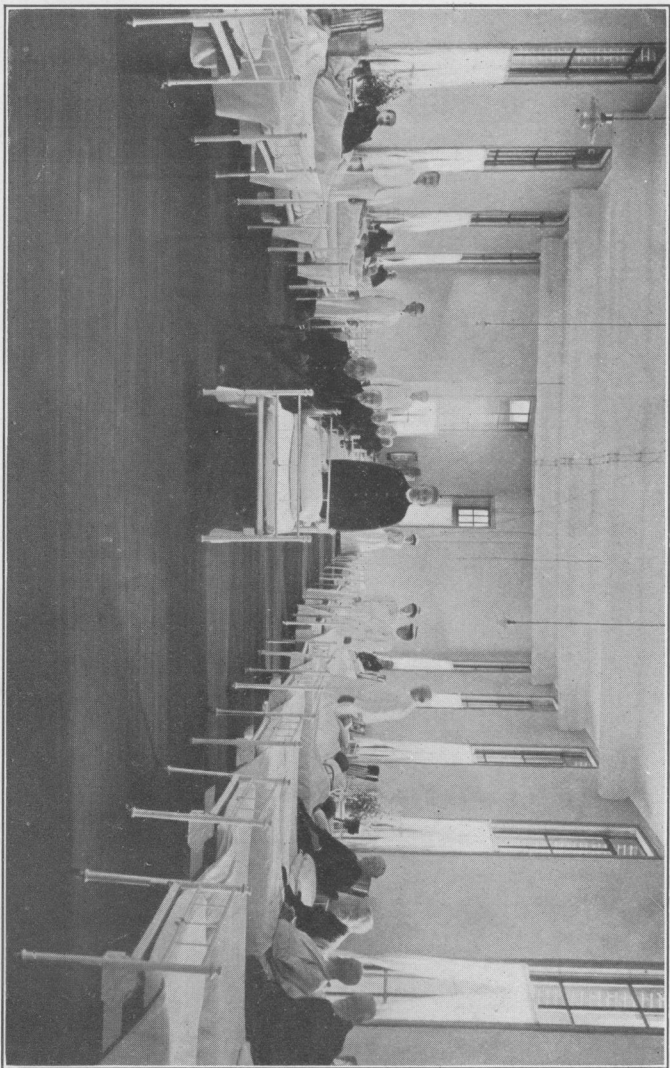
The operating room is thoroughly equipped, for only those advanced in years are brought to the table, and as the profession knows they are the most difficult cases to treat and the slowest ones to recover. The records as to success will compare favorably with any other similar institution in our country. The furniture and bedding are of the very best, and up to date devices for disinfection and sterilization are employed. The X-ray is frequently used to locate fractures, find old rebel lead embedded for years, and for the treatment of cancer, etc., and with as much success as has been done elsewhere.

The diet-kitchen and all other departments are marvels of cleanliness, and the apparatus pertaining to it is up to date in all respects. Many of the old veterans may be seen in their rolling chairs, basking in the sun on the broad and extensive verandas. Crutches are as common as canes in the annex or in the Convalescent Company, and if cases of recovery were to be proved by an exhibit of the same, Dowie's dis-

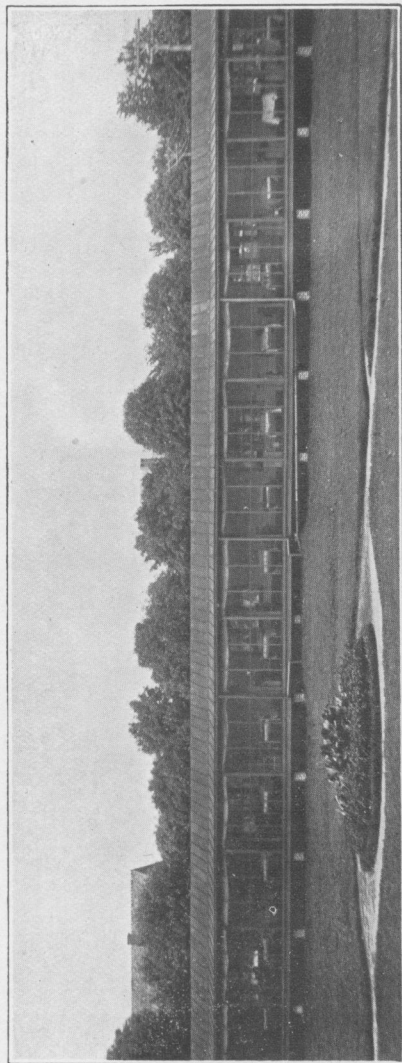
play would sink into insignificance in comparison. Easy and rolling chairs abound in which the old boys can rest their weary bodies when tired of lounging on their beds.

Relatives are admitted, and it is a pleasant sight to see them at all hours of the day sitting at the bedsides of their loved ones or on the porches, which occupy the entire front of the building facing to the south, as well as both ends and the rear, and overlooking the ocean and bay. On this bay the conflict between the *Monitor* and *Merrimac* was fought, and possibly some of its old heroes may have been numbered among those who have found recovery or at least relief from their sufferings.

With all these comforts, scenes such as must occur to all of us are witnessed when the last enemy makes his charge, and the old soldier meets him face to face. It is sad to say, Death is usually the victor. There are instances, however, when the conflict is a long one and he may be driven back for the time being, for there are patients here who have been under the care of



WARD THREE, HOSPITAL



TUBERCULOSIS WARD

the surgeons and nurses over twenty years; one died lately ninety-seven years of age after twenty-one years in the hospital.

The nurses are dressed in white, the emblem of purity, with their heads crowned with small white caps, expressive of those they hope to receive from the Supreme Commander. These will be studded with gems to reward them for their many kind acts and words of sympathy, as they smoothed and cooled the aching brow of many an old veteran, or cheered them in their hours of suffering. When the final summons comes, they draw the sheet over the face of the dead soldier and drop a silent tear as he is carried away to the morgue.

The Adjutant's Office is immediately notified of a death, and at once sends word by telegraph to the friends of the departed, giving them the opportunity of sending for the remains. Should they desire to do this the body is properly made ready for shipment by express at the family's expense, or if not, is laid away here with all the honors of war, regardless of social standing

elsewhere, and with no distinction as to color or previous condition of servitude.

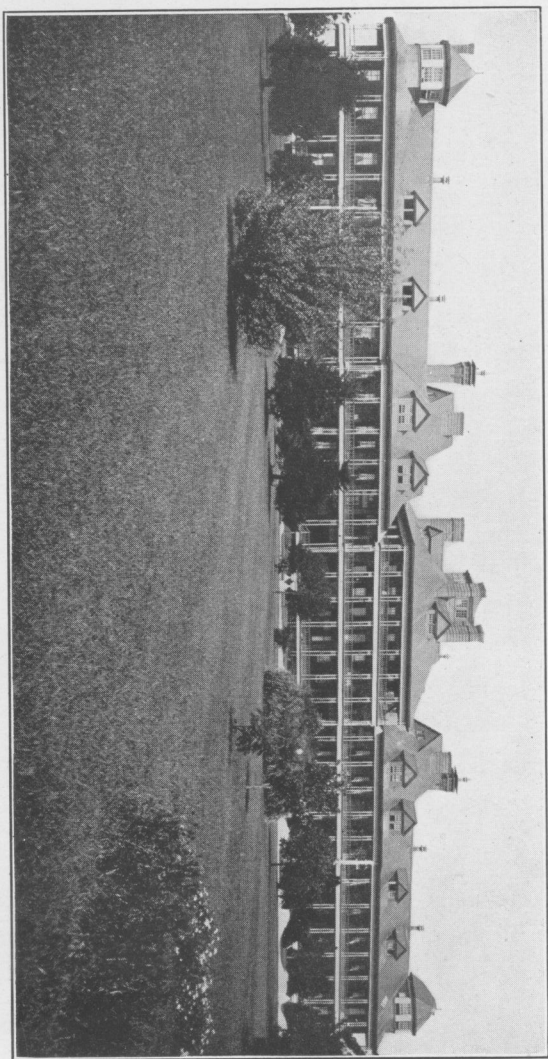
THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT AND DISPENSARY.

There is a completely equipped drug store, with experienced drug clerks and others detailed for its management. One of the surgeons of the hospital is always in attendance to give prescriptions to such as are found in need of medical treatment.

SICK-CALL.

At 8.30 a. m., sick-call is sounded by the bugler, and at times as many as fifty may be seen waiting at the dispensary located on the grounds. Here the vets can tell of their aches and pains, and the surgeon in charge, for any trivial or imaginary complaint, gives them a prescription suited to their case, this prescription being at once filled by the druggist at the opposite end of the room.

The old cry of surgeons in the army may be seen on the cards given out: "dose of salts, or



REAR VIEW OF THE HOSPITAL

castor oil." At the first call a yellow card is given, giving the name and company to which the member belongs and the case or complaint endorsed thereon. If, upon examination, the member is found to be seriously ill he is at once sent to the hospital. In case a member becomes ill in his barracks, a surgeon is immediately sent for, be it either day or night, who prescribes, and medicines are at once sent from the dispensary in the hospital.

CONVALESCENT WARDS.

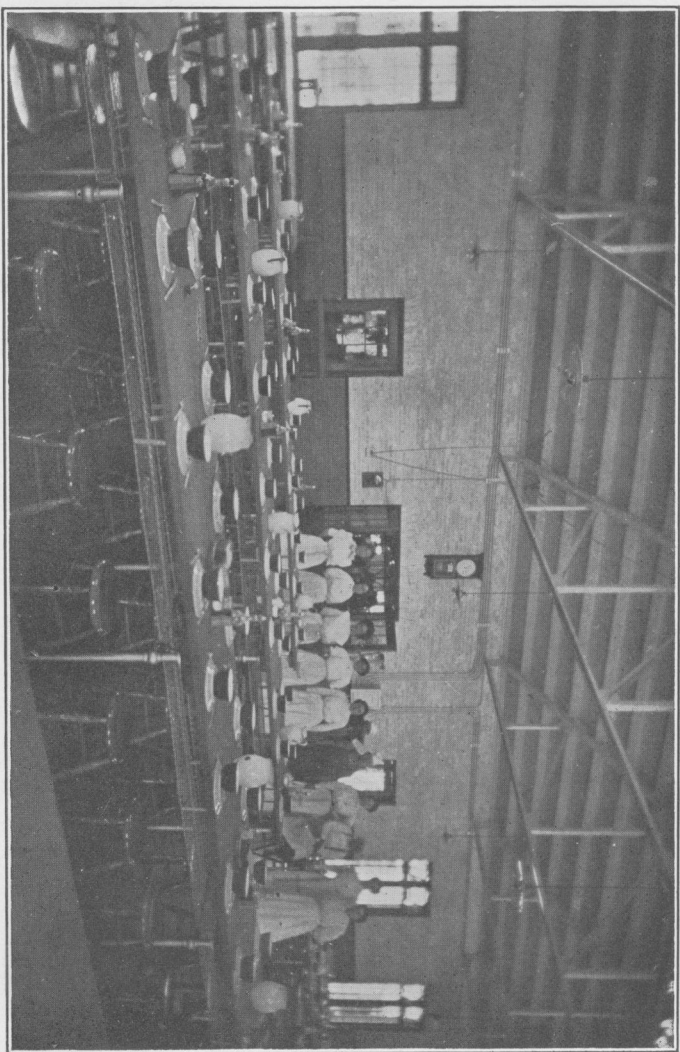
These buildings are among the latest erected on the grounds, and were planned for the purpose, being built only one story high, with a high sloping roof of slate and dormer windows. The appliances and appointments are of the very latest type for the comfort and convenience of those who occupy them. In these buildings, which are in close proximity to the hospital, those who are recovering their health are placed to avoid the scenes enacted daily by such as are very ill or dying. When the members tem-

porarily detained in these wards regain their health, they are assigned to the Convalescent Company, or to the companies from which they were sent when taken sick, or to any other company located conveniently near the dining room. They, as well as all who come here, are given the choice of selecting a company, unless the company so chosen be full, or it be inadvisable for other reasons which may exist in consideration of the best interests of the camp, the Adjutant always being the judge in such cases.

A ward of this building is set apart for the blind, where a reader, appointed for that purpose, recites the news and topics of the day, and reads from magazines and books of fiction as well as from the Book of Books; two hours being spent daily by the reader so appointed.

CONVALESCENT COMPANY.

There is a company in charge of a captain, comprising in its membership those too feeble to perform the ordinary detail work, light as it is, and to which members of other companies



INVALID DINING HALL

are transferred when in a similar condition, known as the Convalescent Company.

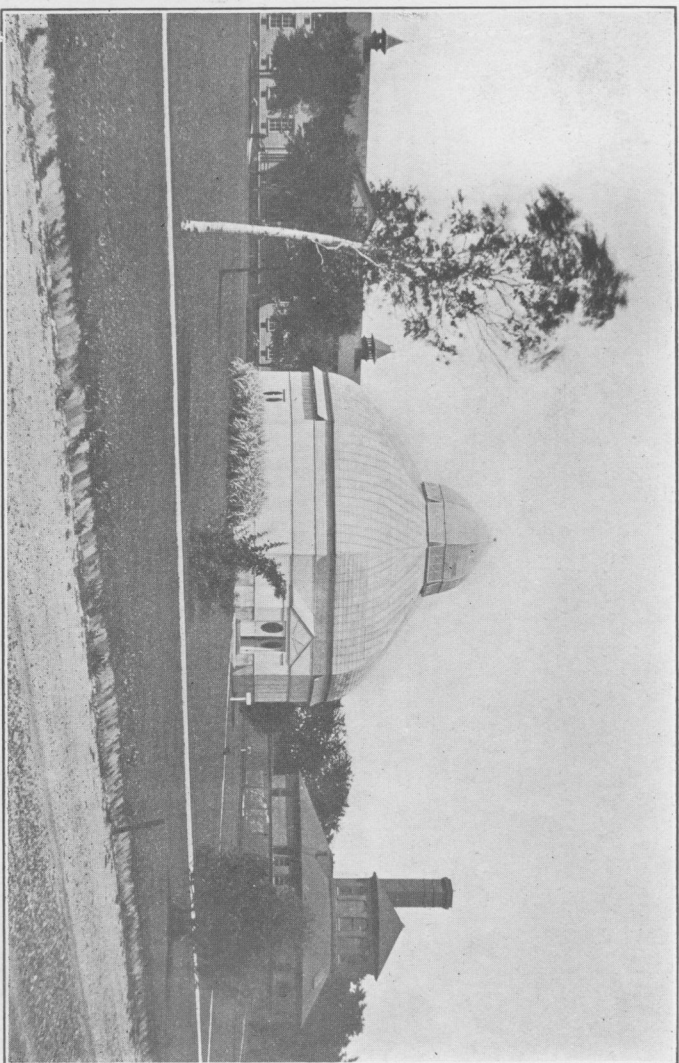
This company is exempt from outside inspection and parade. As the feebleness of its members increases they go to the hospital, then to the road leading to the cemetery, where they receive their final discharge on reaching its confines, or are sent home to family and friends.

The old veterans while in the hospital are provided with everything that can add to their comfort, and among other things is that of house coats made of plaid flannel, reaching well below the knee. Patients unable to walk may be seen in rolling chairs, a sufficient number being kept on hand to supply all such needs, with attendants (detailed men) to aid them in going in and out from the porches. There they may be seen on the sunny side of the building in large numbers, talking over their war experiences, or whiling away their time reading the daily papers and books drawn from the library or supplied from home.

The writer once paid a visit to one of his old

comrades, and found a lady on the porch waiting for her old father to be dressed preparatory to taking him home on a visit up in the valley of the Blue Juniata, in Pennsylvania. He was a Mexican War veteran as well as of the Civil War who came here just one year before, suffering with chronic rheumatism and other ailments, and had been confined to his bed so long that he had almost forgotten how to walk. It was a pleasant sight to see his comrade nurses cheering him up as they assisted him up and down the floor and aided him in again learning to walk, while waiting for the hospital steward to return from headquarters with his papers and transportation order, with which to go home with his daughter. He is eighty years old, and hopes to return here to end his days.

In no hospital in our land can there be found such kind attention as is given the sick here by their comrades who are detailed from the various companies, and selected by the surgeon for their peculiar adaptation and fitness for the



CONSERVATORY

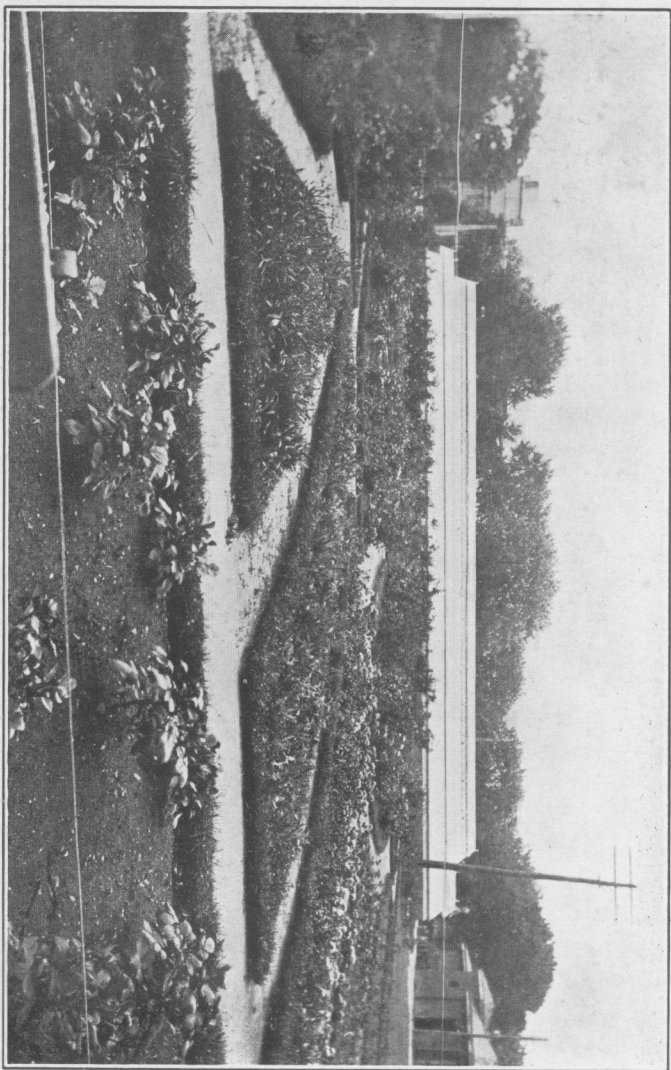
work. They are not actuated in their duties by what little money they get as remuneration for the gentle and faithful service, but by that friendship which is known only by comrades for each other.

Flowers fresh from the conservatory in winter and the garden in summer are placed in all the wards, giving out their fragrance and enjoyment to the sick. A large bouquet, which would cost several dollars if purchased in our cities north, is made from these sources and placed on the casket of every veteran buried here in the National Cemetery.

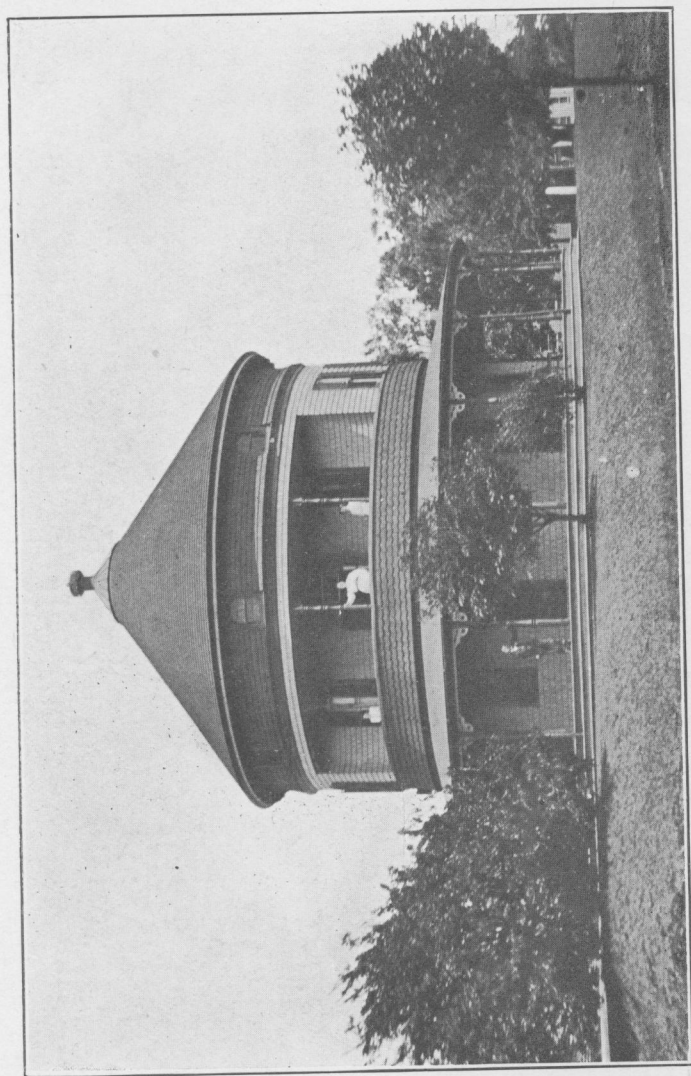
Note.—While I was writing the Appendix there were two deaths in our hospital in the month of May, 1910,—men who had been patients there for twenty-one and twenty-two years respectively, and were helpless invalids. Their lives were made comfortable and every care and attention shown them during all these long years and in their last days before leaving for the Camp Ground to be mustered out and receive daily pensions (instead of quarterly).

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," etc. (Rev. 21:4.)

In no hospital in the land or as inmates of any charitable institution could they have lived so long, and that without the cost of a penny. But here they were not inmates (the word is not permitted in any document) but *members* of the Home, which belongs to us, donated and endowed by the greatest government on earth, which we suffered to save and which shows its gratitude by doing everything to make our last days our best days. "Where we take no thought for the morrow," etc. (Matt. 6: 34.) And we may change the words of Solomon somewhat: "That plenty with contentment is great gain."



GARDEN AND NURSERY



THE HOTEL

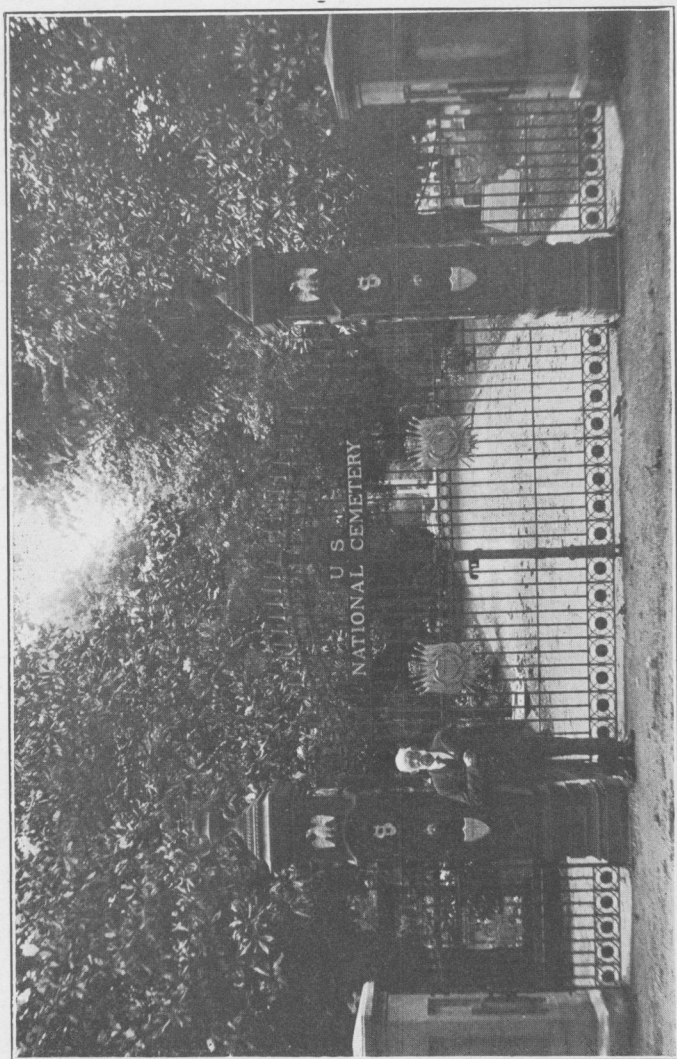
CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HOME HOTEL.

There is a hotel open the year round, well equipped with pleasant and airy rooms overlooking the bay, well furnished, and with every convenience including baths.

The dining-room is on the first floor and meals are furnished on the American plan in connection with rooms. There is also a café, where almost anything called for can be supplied à la carte—and all at very moderate rates. The author has had old comrades and their wives entertained there, who have often stopped at the Chamberlin, and who expressed themselves as being as well satisfied in every respect and with avoiding the continual dressing and crowds. As a place of rest they said it could not be excelled. A French chef and his assistants are in charge of the kitchen and can serve a wide variety of the most tempting and

appetizing dishes. The matron, who is a Southern lady, looks after the guests with that manner of hospitality which was noted in the South for years before the war and makes every one feel at home in the hotel, and when they leave, it is with pleasant recollections of her kind attention to their wants.



GATEWAY OF THE CEMETERY

CHAPTER XXV.

CEMETERIES.

The Old Cemetery was projected and opened in 1867 by the United States Government (it had previously for a short time been used by the Confederates), and the remains of soldiers and sailors who had been killed in battle and buried on the field, as well as those who had died in the hospitals from wounds or sickness, are interred therein.

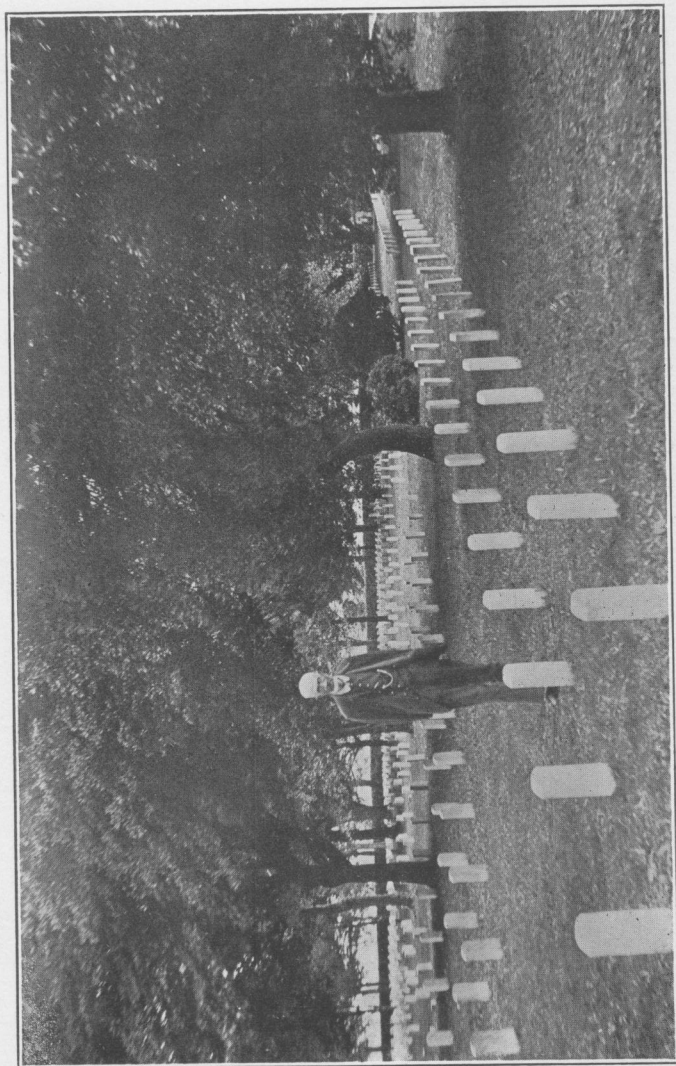
The grounds contain eleven acres, inclosed by a substantial stone wall, and with a comfortable lodge or dwelling for the keeper. The remains buried there came mainly from Norfolk, Portsmouth, Newport News, and Fortress Monroe; including graveyards and battlefields within a radius of about twenty-five miles. There are 6,629 graves of Federal soldiers in this cemetery, in addition to about 300 graves of Confederate soldiers who died in our hospitals

as prisoners of war; the graves of our soldiers being marked by modest marble headstones, neatly lettered with name, company and regiment. The graves of the Confederates are also marked with stones, similar to those of the Union veterans except that they are an inch thinner.

A part of the cemetery has been reserved for years for the use of the regular army for the interment of deceased soldiers of Fortress Monroe, or sailors of our ships. The entire space set apart for graves having been used, it was officially closed by the Secretary of War in 1892, at which time another cemetery was acquired and opened which is now used for members of the Home, so that at the present time there are 9,140 graves in both cemeteries, with the number rapidly increasing.

"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note," is the first line of the poem on the burial of Sir John Moore, and applies equally well to this cemetery since 1892.

The poem above referred to was the first



CONFEDERATE GRAVES

declamation or oratorical effort of the writer when a boy at school at the old Academy in Auburn, Maine, in 1847. It was listened to and criticised by the older boys, among whom was Hon. William P. Frye, United States Senator from Maine, and Judge Gilmore, of Colorado, a half-brother of Major O. O. Howard, whom he met in Denver in 1894 at a banquet of the Chamber of Commerce and who sat in the same quartette at the table, and recognized the writer after an absence from the old school dating back to 1848.

It is a beautiful place for the tourist to visit, as well as the friends of loved ones whose remains lie mouldering in the ground, as many of them no doubt often sang about old John Brown. The graves are well cared for and the grounds neatly kept; shade trees of almost endless variety abound, from the choicest of the native growth to the numerous importations of the skillful florist.

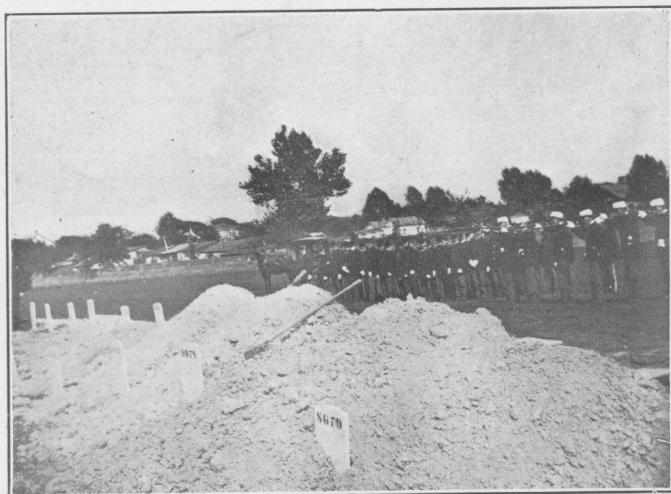
On the road between the two cemeteries there stands a very remarkable freak of nature in the

shape of a paper mulberry tree of which the roots project out of the ground so as to form a basin which holds about twenty gallons of water, enough to take a bath in, and is always full after a rain.

The new cemetery was opened for use in 1892, and contains eight acres, one fourth of which is set apart for the regular army, and navy, with their families. The first burial in this cemetery from the National Home, D. V. S., was May 28, 1892, and the grave was numbered 6,685. It is enclosed by a neat brick wall, five feet high, capped with stone and built with pilasters with panels between. The gates on the east and west sides are beautifully designed and are evidences of the mechanic's skill and workmanship. There are a few trees planted along the driveways, but it is not intended to have such an abundance of shrubbery and shade as is to be found in the old cemetery, on account of its effects upon the marble. There is a newness about this cemetery which reminds one of the cities of the dead on our western



A FUNERAL



LAST SALUTE

prairies; plenty of room for more, but fast filling up. Hardly a day passes but the drum is heard with the funeral note; two yesterday, and two again to-morrow, of different religious persuasions, one a Catholic and the other a Protestant, and up to the present writing, the time of closing these "Optic Views," the last grave was numbered 8,752. There they await the trumpet blast of the Archangel summoning them for that grand review before the Great Commander.

Note.—Since writing the above number, 8,752, in four years there have been added to this number graves up to 9,901, this being the last grave at this date, June 1, 1910.

*One by one the vets are going
To the camp ground bright and fair,
Answering the last roll call, knowing
They will muster over there.*

*Doing and daring for the right,
They with pain and suffering languished;
They have fallen in the fight,
While their last foe has been vanquished.*

CHAPTER XXVI.

FUNERALS.

With all the pleasant scenes and beautiful surroundings, to greet new members, and to render life pleasant to the old ones, there is one that brings a feeling of sadness to the heart, and that is the almost daily burials; sometimes several in one day have been witnessed by the writer. Many of us became used to trying scenes during the War of the Rebellion, when human blood flowed freely, and when the agonized cries of the dying were echoed from the very earth that seemed waiting to receive all that was mortal and close the scene. But we become hardened from day to day and look upon that phase of the life of a soldier as one of the natural features, as in fact it is. The funeral cortege goes and comes with apparent relief, and when the duty is done, a sigh may be heard and felt, with the almost careless remark, "Well, who next?" or "It will soon be my turn," etc.

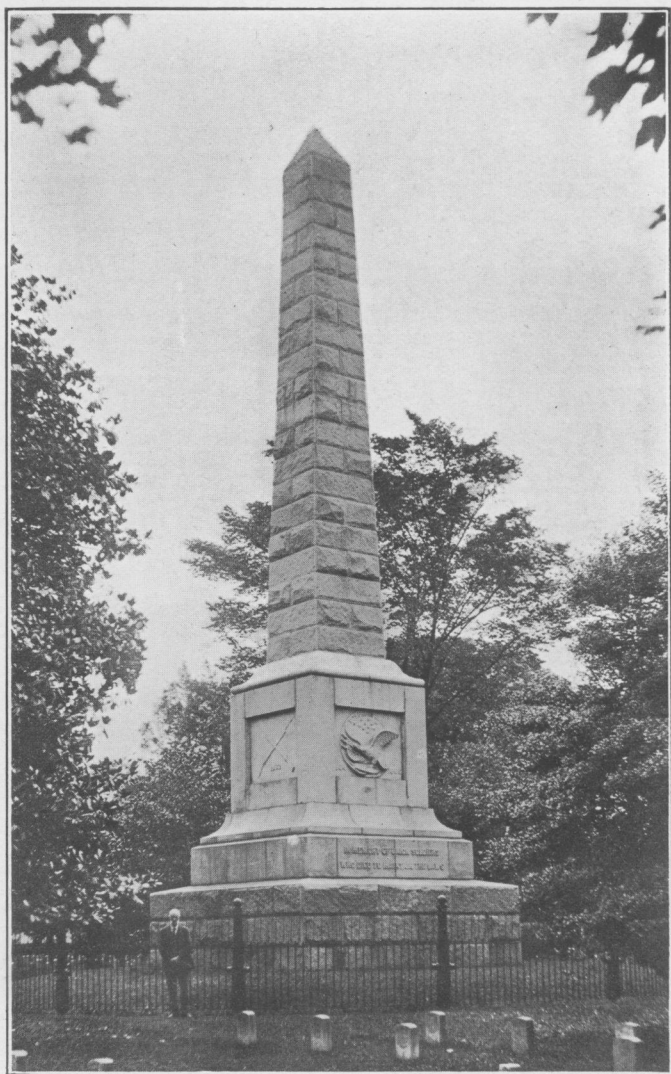
Immediately after a veteran has succumbed to the last battle, notice is sent to one of the Council of Administration, who immediately takes charge of his effects and makes an inventory in the presence of designated witnesses. An appraisal is then made by the full Board of Administration and the effects are turned over to the quartermaster for safe keeping; all money being placed in the hands of the treasurer of the Home subject to the order of proper relatives. The great question which comes to the heart of the writer is, *Who next?* Will it be you or I, comrade? For some are taken suddenly while in comparatively good health; one died in the bathroom the other day; others are found dead in their beds, while many drop suddenly and expire in the walks.

A sad case occurred recently during the annual inspection by the Inspector-General, lately become Governor. An old veteran, a member of Home Company C, being in his eighty-eighth year and quite feeble, was still anxious to be on hand and stood, soldier-like, at attention at the

foot of his bed as the inspector passed. In a few minutes, however, he was found out on the porch breathing his last; doctors were immediately sent for, but in a few minutes it was all over with the old soldier. He had been a member of the Home since April, 1873, and was highly respected, not only by the officers and members of the Home but by citizens of the surrounding country. Many of the old fellows seem anxious to put off the last roll call in an endeavor to absorb the surplus in the United States Treasury by living on and drawing their pensions for so many years.

Many, very many peculiar final scenes might be cited, as they occur not only in the hospital, but in almost every building of the Home, as well as occasionally in the brothels and saloons in the adjoining towns, the circle of shame which surrounds this noble institution, and which disgraces the almost sacred soil of the State of Virginia.

Military honors are paid to every veteran, however humble has been his position in life,



SOLDIERS' MONUMENT, CEMETERY

without distinction of former rank, for all stand on an equal footing here.

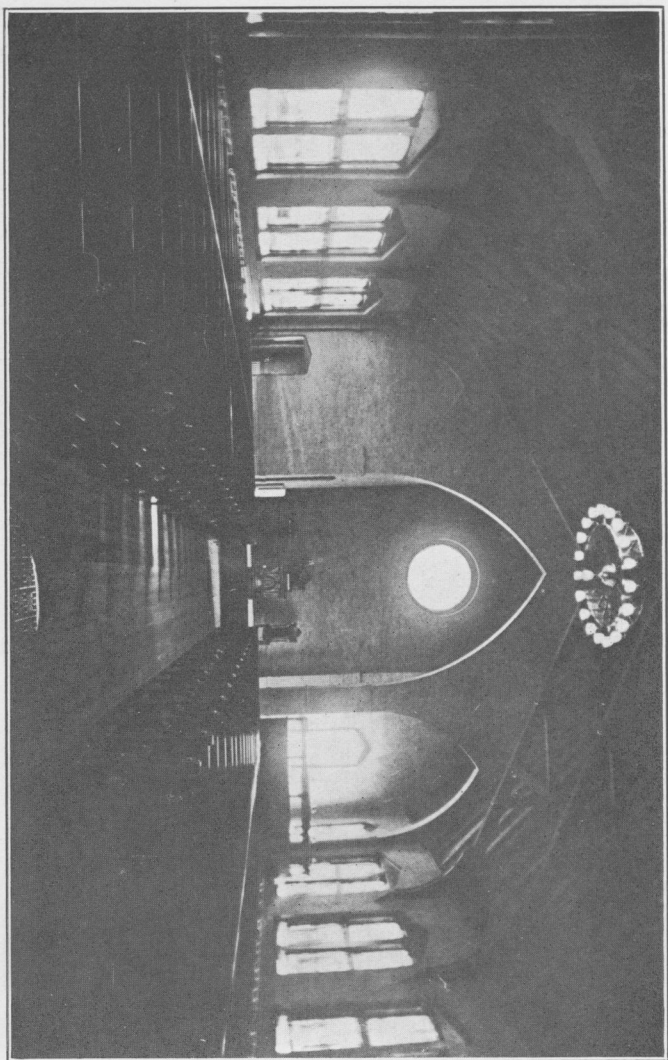
When a death occurs at the hospital at night, notice is sent to the Adjutant's Office in the morning report, or if during the day, at once. The family or friends who have been placed on the admission papers are notified immediately by telegraph and asked if they wish the remains, which are placed in the morgue awaiting reply, sent home. If no word is received they are prepared for burial, laid out in best uniform, placed in a neat casket, with nickel-plated handles, and on the day set for the funeral are brought to the chapel. Here services are held by the Chaplain (or priest, if a Catholic).

The Company to which the deceased belonged is ordered out as escort (or if the dead veteran has been long in the hospital, a detail of four from each Company), and the line is formed, headed by the full band and firing squad. The casket is placed on a caisson, covered with Old Glory and a beautiful bouquet of flowers from the Conservatory (or hothouse if in winter),

placed upon it, and the line of march is taken up for the cemetery, where the service of the church to which he belonged is read, followed by a salute from the firing squad.

If the family telegraph for the remains, accompanying the telegram with a remittance for the cost of embalming and outside case, they are sent by express on the same day. But in any case the remains are held for two days after death. If the deceased has requested that he be clothed in civilian dress, this is done. Should the family fail to pay the cost of embalming and the outside case, together with the cost of transportation, the burial is made in the Government National Cemetery after sufficient time has elapsed to hear from the family by wire.

If for any reasons the family fails to send for the remains before the funeral, after they have been held for a sufficient time, the funeral takes place, but the body can be disinterred within a reasonable time. Funerals are frequently stopped by a message after the service has begun at the chapel or cemetery.



PROTESTANT WING OF THE CHAPEL

CHAPTER XXVII.

ATTRACTIVE POINTS FOR THE TOURIST.

There are many places in and near the Home where one can find much of interest to study.

Hampton, the oldest town on the Atlantic coast, was first settled by a party of English emigrants, who came there in 1668, led by Captain John Smith, the saving of whose life by Pocahontas is known to every school boy in the land. The settlement was then called Powhatan. Little can be seen of its former buildings, the town having been almost totally destroyed by fire in 1861. The only building left standing was Saint John's Church, built in 1728, from material brought from England. The town was attacked by the British in 1775, but was successfully defended. And again, in 1813, the English, under Admiral Cockburn and Sir Sidney Beckwith, paid it another visit, captured the town after an unsuccessful resistance, and

laid it in ashes; but the most destructive and complete devastation was in 1861, when it was burned by General Magruder, of Confederate fame, assisted by many of the residents setting fire to their own property in preference to permitting it to fall into the hands of the Federals. On this occasion the destruction was most complete, not a building left was standing, and only the bare and charred walls of two Colonial houses and the walls of old St. John's Church remained. The town was soon rebuilt after its occupation by the Federal troops. During the War of 1812, barracks for the army were erected on the grounds, and it is said that Bishop Moore held religious services within the ruins of the old church, which so inspired the parishioners that they rebuilt the church in 1827.

It is indeed a quaint as well as a unique old structure, the decorations of the windows being indeed beautiful and a real art-study. One of them is a memorial window to the rectors of the parish from 1611 to 1776. The first missionary efforts were held in Lambert place in 1701 and



THE CHAPEL

one needs only to see this memorial window to fully appreciate its wonderful beauty as a masterpiece of art.

The Communion service, which was made in London, England, in 1618, has been in continuous service ever since; it is truly a masterly example of the silversmith's art, and no doubt will compare favorably with kindred productions in the days of the Apostle Paul. The communion membership is largely made up from the students of the Hampton Industrial School for Indians and Colored Students. The old graveyard surrounding the church is an intensely interesting place, many quaint inscriptions on stones and monuments hold the contemplative mind in interesting thought and study; various traits of character are portrayed in words and letters of those whose remains have long since mingled with the mother earth.

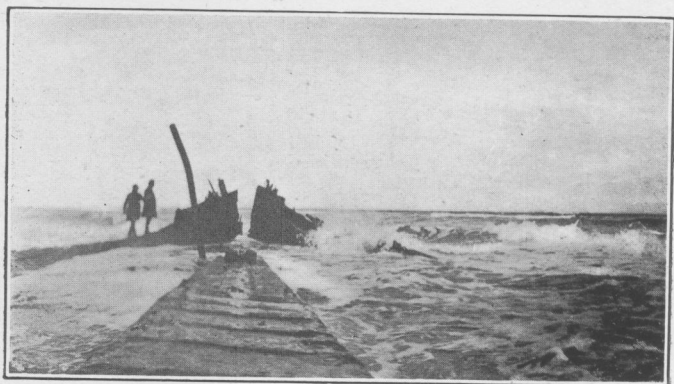
HAMPTON INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTE.

General S. C. Armstrong founded this school in 1868, as a practical place for the instruction and education of the colored youth set free by

President Lincoln's proclamation in 1863, and who were scattered all over the South. The fear and dread of the results of this act agitated the minds not only of the white people of the South, but also of the most intelligent and thoughtful people of the North, for the negroes only knew one occupation, that of agriculture.

Later, it was thought wise to take in the Indian boys from the tribes of the far West, and in 1878 the experiment was tried. There was no clashing or irritation on account of color or previous condition, either of servitude on the part of the colored lad of the South, or of roving tendencies and characteristics in his copper-colored neighbor. The alumni embrace about twenty thousand students who have gone out from its halls and shops able to cope with other graduates in science, arts, mechanics, etc. It was to this school that Booker T. Washington came as a poor boy, and to its curriculum he largely owes his fitness to be one of the foremost leaders of his race.

Many memorial buildings have been erected



OLD HULKS DRIVEN ASHORE



WRECKS ON THE VIRGINIA COAST

on the grounds of the Institute. The library was built by Mrs. Huntington and her son, as a memorial to the late C. P. Huntington, the great railroad king, who did much to develop Virginia through his efforts as President of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. In fact he founded the city of Newport News, and made it what it is to-day, by building one of the largest ship-building plants in our country. Other memorial buildings are the Monroe Chapel, Virginia Hall and Cleveland Hall, but those monuments which will be more lasting than brick or stone are the industrial works. These shops have been erected almost entirely by student labor, and from them have gone out many young men well qualified to take their places side by side with the brightest young men from the leading institutions of our country. The various shops and buildings are an interesting study to the visitor, and are open at all times.

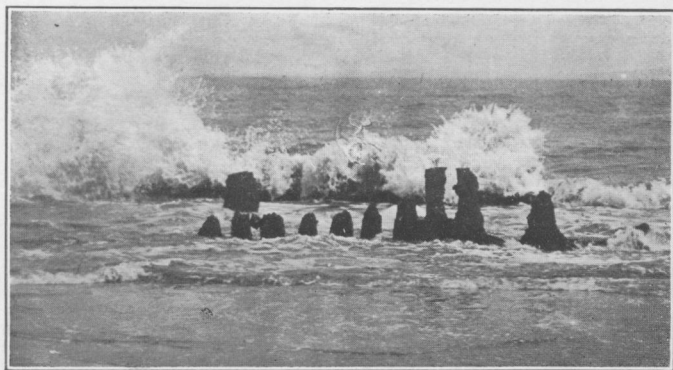
A visit to this institution was one of the greatest studies in psychology to the writer,

and opened wide his optics with wonder and amazement. He will honestly say that if, at the beginning of the war of the Rebellion, he had been told it was for the purpose of freeing the slaves, it is doubtful if to-day he would be a member of the National Soldiers' Home.

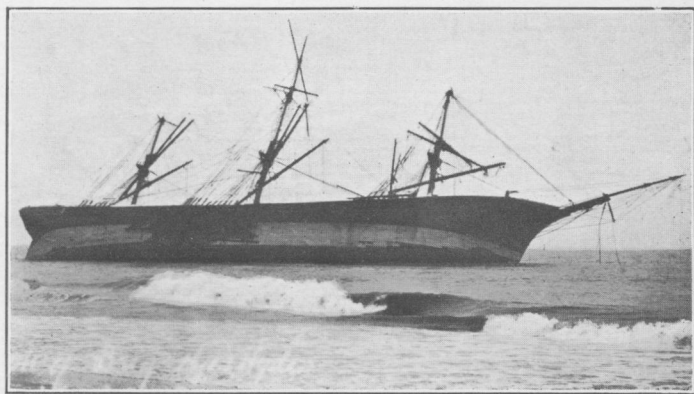
OLD POINT COMFORT.

This has been an attractive point for years, to those especially whose bank accounts were large, and the old Hygeia Hotel was for years a restful resort during the winter months for many from the North whose vitality had waned from excessive rounds of pleasure and dissipation in our northern cities. Not only in the winter months, but all through the year the register of the Chamberlin, one of the finest hotels in the country, is well filled.

Much could be said of points near by: Yorktown, Norfolk, Williamsburg, Jamestown, and last but not least, Newport News. It may truthfully be said that the latter is one of the most interesting cities that has been built up in



WRECKAGE ON THE SHORE



STRANDED ON THE BEACH

the South since the Civil War. Thousands of skilled mechanics from every State of the Union have been attracted to this place, which has grown from a sand marsh as it was when Colonel Collis P. Huntington first saw the advantages of its spacious harbor of deep water, to a city of 30,000 inhabitants, and is still rapidly increasing with evidences on every hand of more stability than many of our western cities beyond the Mississippi River or west of the Rocky Mountains; its streets are broad, well paved, and it is an up-to-date place in every respect.

Many fine residences have been erected, which will compare favorably with any in the country, and in a ride over the two lines the writer only saw "To Let" on two houses, although the sign "Furnished Rooms" abounds, showing that the owners, who are employed in the ship-yard and railroad shops, like comfortable homes and are always ready to spare a room to those who come here for employment, and at the same time give the thrifty housewife an opportunity to earn a little pin-money.

The boating and fishing as well as crabbing and the gathering of oysters and clams are an attraction and all along the shore in this vicinity are large establishments from which canned oysters and crabs are shipped. This industry is carried on most successfully, the output being equal in quality to any in the country.

There is much to see here at the Soldiers' Home, and one who goes about with his optics open wide to take in the full scope of the landscape and the sea view, will find it much like a kaleidoscope, ever changing. Only to-day a scene that would attract thousands to the city parks was enjoyed by the writer and many others. The ships of our navy that lie in full view from the breakwater require room for their crews for drilling on shore. As the drill ground is used daily by the Fort soldiers it is unavailable and the commanders of the warships bring their crews ashore and march them up to the Home grounds, coming through the streets of Phœbus, for a distance of about two miles. This limbers up the young tars and marines,

and the open ground in front of the breakwater, containing about ten acres, gives full opportunity for their various drills.

About fifteen hundred, led by their officers, assembled here recently and went through their tactics in fine style, and after formation in line the officers saluted the Admiral in command of the fleet and turned the command over to him, who put them through at a lively pace.

Admiral Dewey once paid us a visit and the Governor ordered out the command for a review. The Admiral clapped his hands, and exclaimed that it was the greatest sight he ever witnessed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

RETROSPECT.

The writer looks back with pleasure over his twenty months' sojourn in the Home as a member. The physical improvement it has made in him and the enjoyment derived from meeting with old comrades, many of whom he had not seen since the close of the Rebellion in 1865, will not soon be forgotten. Those who like himself have been forced to come here through infirmities of old age, the breaking of home ties, or inability to provide for themselves, are largely of the better class; for those who came here in the years just after the war, who had broken down from disease contracted in the service, or habits formed during those days of hardship and suffering, are rapidly passing over the ramparts that separate Time from Eternity, as is shown by the records of the Home, over three hundred having died during the past eighteen months. Although

seven hundred have been admitted as new members in addition to a large number of readmissions from those who had taken their discharges thinking that they could support themselves, and others transferred from other Homes, deaths, discharges and transfers to other Homes, with some few who are dishonorably discharged, have kept the membership about the same as at the time of the author's first coming here in August, 1904—about 3,500—which is the full capacity of this branch. Many men become discontented or think that a climatic change will be beneficial, while others become dissatisfied from the slight restraint and rules which are required in all the Homes, as prescribed by the Board of Managers, regarding cleanliness, hours for rising and retiring, etc. But for one of sober, steady habits and due regard for tidiness and cleanliness, the restraint is hardly perceptible, for every privilege is accorded by the Governor to go and come from 7 a. m. to 8.30 p. m. and special passes when asked for as may be required. Passes are

cheerfully accorded to those who wish to be out as late as twelve, midnight, to attend lodges, church or other purposes. Were it not for the rules as made by the board, the better class of sober, respectable men could not live here, and every encouragement is given by the Governor to those whose habits have weakened their will powers, to regain them again. The sickness, infirmities and old age of the veterans who are so rapidly finishing their last march, have a great deal to do with the dispositions of us all. That women get cranky when they grow old (*if they ever do*) is an old saying, but it is the experience of the writer that the sterner sex can outcrank them, himself included. If, as in the old Scotch saying, we could "see ourselves as others see us" we would have to confess that perfection has not been reached by any of us, and we may try, as many do, to shake off the idea that we are growing old, yet not only the looking glass but our enfeebled steps clearly contradict that impression. Many come here, get rested up and recuperate as a result of the

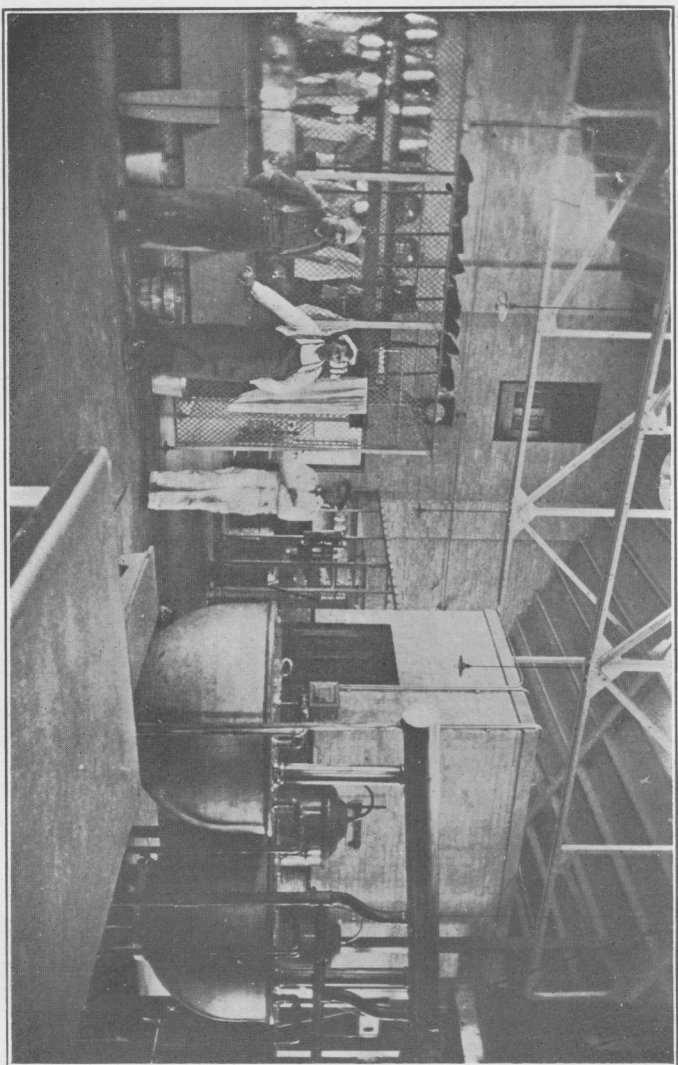
pure air, surroundings and good healthful diet, and still having ambition to help themselves, which is characteristic of an American, go out on furlough seeking employment, while others more confident of their abilities will take an honorable discharge only to be found back again after a few months. They find that those they knew in former years have died, or their old haunts are peopled by a younger set of men who jostle them aside or tell them they are back numbers and should look into the cemeteries to find their friends of former days. God bless our Nation and those who after the war saw the need of such Homes as have been so lavishly provided for us, and supplied every comfort to make our last days happy and peaceful.

Vast improvements have lately been made both to the grounds and buildings, such as granolithic side-walks, miles of new and larger steam and hot water pipes; improved and up-to-date plumbing; a large extension of the sea-wall made of concrete, which will add some eight acres of ground on the bay front, and a pile and

planking bulkhead on Jones' Creek in the rear of the grounds, which will give some acres of additional land for coal storage and other purposes. A new propagating house has been built, which will enable our chief florist to provide plants, etc., liberally, for the adornment of the grounds.

IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTED FOR THE COMING
YEAR.

It has been found necessary that a cold storage be provided for the kitchen of the general mess hall, in which to keep sweet and preserve the meats after being cooked, which has to be done several hours before the time to be used for the meals. A large brick barrack which is planned for the Convalescent Company, whose membership is increasing rapidly (in fact in a few years the entire Home will be made up of convalescents or those too feeble to well look after themselves), will have its own kitchen and mess hall for the cripples and enfeebled men, thereby avoiding exposure in cold or rainy weather.



KITCHEN FOR INVALID DINING HALL

The new cemetery, which was opened for interments in 1892, is nearly full and the Board is about to add many acres thereto from ground adjoining, which now belongs to the Industrial School at Hampton.

A telephone system is being planned to be placed in every building, with central station at the guard house. By this the Governor can reach any office of the companies or departments day or night, and commanders of companies can also call up the hospital at any time.

IN CONCLUSION.

The writer desires to say to the old vets that if death or other causes have compelled them to break up their homes, and they do not care to be dependent on their children or others, let them pack up and make application for admission to the Home here, where they will receive a warm and cordial welcome from the Governor, regardless of what their life has been in the past.

To those enfeebled in health who want to prolong their lives, there is no better sanitarium

to be found in the United States (except perhaps for those who may be suffering from bronchial or lung troubles) than right here. The climate is perfect all the year round. Winters are mild (only two small snow storms this year) and in the summer the cool breezes blow from the ocean. A blanket always comes in handy during the summer months and in winter a proper temperature is maintained by our steam heating system. It is easy of access by sail or steamboat from all points of the country, and in addition there are many other attractions.

The bay, with its warships and other vessels, provides a constantly changing panorama.

A new conservatory is projected with enlarged facilities for caring for plants and ferns, many of the latter having extended their branches through the top of the dome in the old building, and the many beautiful flowers which are grown to provide a bouquet for the casket of every old vet when he leaves the Chapel on his way to the cemetery, his last camping ground.

THE GRAND ARMY BADGE.

When the long roll has sounded
My last long alarm,
When my spirit and body shall part,
When my name has been called
And at rest well-earned,
With my hands folded over my heart,
When no more shall the reveille
Wake with the day,
And call me from labor to rest,
Then bury me as a true soldier should be,
With my Grand Army badge on my breast.

Let me sleep my last sleep
With my beautiful star,
With its banner and eagle and all
Close to my still breast,
Which has ever been true
To the Flag at my loved country's call.
In my life 'twas the emblem of loyalty,
Truth and charity, sweetest and best,
Then bury me when my last summons shall come,
With my Grand Army badge on my breast.

'Tis the badge that no traitor's breast
Ever shall wear,
'Tis an emblem of loyalty true,
'Tis a broad shield of brotherhood,
Spotless and fair,
The most beautiful red, white and blue;
'Tis an emblem no monarch can ever bestow,
And none but the brave e'er possessed,
And so I desire to sleep my last sleep
With my Grand Army badge on my breast.

And in that grandest muster
On that brighter shore,
When we pass our great final review,
It will shine on to show
That my loyal heart beats
To my country and Flag ever true.
'Twill be a prized emblem
To show in that land,
The beautiful land of the blest;
Then bury me where my last tattoo shall sound,
With my Grand Army badge on my breast.
—AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

“MEMORIAL DAY,” MAY 30, 1910.

Thou Great Commander who hast led
Vets and comrades through this life,
Safely spared them midst showers of lead,
Through the thickest of the strife,
With waving colors they trusted thee then,
Jesus Saviour, now lead them.

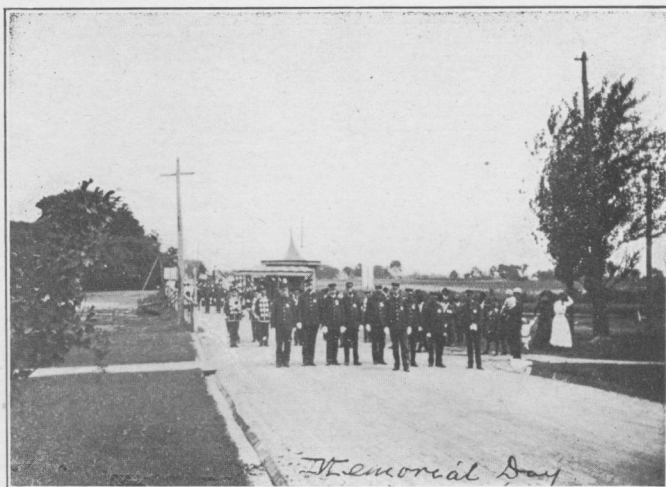
When they stood where cannon roared,
Where their comrades fell thick and fast,
Then it was thee whom they implored
To bring them safely through at last,
To meet with those who fought and fell
Fighting for country they loved so well.

One by one they are going over
The great divide twixt here and there,
Suffering with pain and anguish,
To the camp grounds bright and fair,
Doing, daring for the right,
They have fallen in the fight.



WOODFIN MEMORIAL

Captain P. T. Woodfin, Governor, Southern Branch, from
March 31, 1874, until his death, August 24, 1901.



MEMORIAL DAY, May 30, 1910.

When at last they reach the shore,
Hear their Leader call the roll,
Never, never to part any more,
Know their names are on his scroll,
Hear thee say, thou didst fight well,
And earned a mansion in which to dwell.

In that bright realm above,
There will meet the Blue and Grey,
Clasping hands in mutual love,
In one long eternal day,
Though they differed here below,
There their greetings they bestow.

—THE AUTHOR.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

The author prepared the MS. with the intention of having it printed and published in time for the Jamestown Exposition, but owing to circumstances which arose, it was abandoned for the time being. Since then many and extensive improvements have been made both to the grounds and buildings, involving an expenditure of over eight hundred thousand dollars, appropriated through the generosity and liberality of Congress. Such work has been done as filling-in and grading eight acres behind the concrete sea wall built in 1905, by pumping in sand from the bay; also in building the revetment on Jones' Creek from the wharf to the bridge at Hampton Gate, adding an additional two acres, so that there are now 85.36 acres in all in the grounds.

The following new buildings have been erected, viz:

A new power house fronting on Jones' Creek, with modern machinery for handling coal by lifting and feeding it to the furnaces automatically.

The boilers furnish steam and hot water to every building in the Home, both barracks and shops, also heating all buildings by steam. Two large electric generators of 225 K. W. are installed in the new building which furnish not only all light but power to the shops of various kinds and to the bakery and laundry.

The new power house is erected on partly new made ground and ooze on the edge of Jones' Creek and great difficulty was met with in getting a suitable foundation. Piles were driven close together to a depth of sixty feet to hard clay, then sawed off level and capped with concrete, grilled with I beams and reinforced before a satisfactory foundation could be obtained and the structure erected.

The chimney is 186 feet in height and not a crack in either the building or chimney has been discovered. Coal is

delivered to bunkers overhead by an electric conveyor, and is supplied to the boilers by gravity through a scale giving the correct weight of the amount consumed, and ashes are removed by the same conveyor used in raising the coal. The boilers are larger than those used in the old power house, but fewer in number, only six being required which are of 250 H. P., and supply steam for the general uses of all buildings on the Home grounds, heating of the buildings and cooking in the two mess halls and the hospital mess, and for the operation of the several pumping stations on the grounds. Where the electric current was formerly purchased from the Newport News Electric Light Company, it is now supplied by our own plant for all the machinery in the ice plant, machine shops, and other places where power is required, such as elevators, etc.

Two wings to the quartermaster's building have been built, adding much to its appearance as well as utility. The west wing is used by the quartermaster for his office, and all the departments pertaining thereto are in charge of well trained and efficient clerks. The tailor shop and shoe shop are in this new wing, with the scouring shop for clothing turned in by members when leaving, which is all thoroughly renovated, repaired and reissued again.

A new dry-cleaning plant is being installed and is nearly completed, by which, with the use of gasoline, the color and texture of clothing are maintained.

There has also been provided in the quartermaster's building, a cold storage for woolen clothing and blankets, kept at such a low temperature that no moths or other insects could live in it to attack the cloth.

The east wing is used by the Commissary Department, in which are the offices of commissary and clerks as well as the warehouse containing the stores and miscellaneous supplies issued daily, and in a wing connected with it is the cold storage for meats, eggs and butter in separate compartments. The cellar is used for storing potatoes and other supplies.

A coffee-roasting and grinding room with all new and up-

to-date machinery is installed in the building. The coffee is bought in its green state without any chance for adulteration or manipulation. "Purity and Freshness" is the motto of the commissary department in all supplies used here in catering to the wants of the inner man.

Three new barracks for convalescents and invalids (we will all be invalids in a few years), with covered passage-ways to the dining-room, have been erected for convenience and comfort in cold and stormy weather.

A dining hall has been built to supply the need as stated above, with every modern appliance in the kitchen for cooking and washing dishes, of the most hygienic order.

A new chapel has replaced the old one, with two wings for both Protestant and Catholic uses, with a main entrance and vestibule which answers for both denominations, as well as a side entrance for each. The building stands on a triangular plot of ground near Hampton Gate on two main avenues. It would be difficult to describe the interior except as to the opalescent glass in all the windows; those in the gables being exceptionally beautiful, illustrating events in the Bible, and must be seen to appreciate their artistic effect. The pictures herewith can only give the outline in black and white.

A front addition to the hospital and a new wing thereto, the need for which has been felt for a long time, but more so in late years, owing to the large increase of infirmities as the members approach the three score years and ten. The peradventure period, as set forth in the Bible, finds almost all, including many of the more active veterans, changing from the barracks of the more active members to those of the convalescents and invalids.

In making the changes and alterations to the hospital a tuberculosis ward has been provided by utilizing a long passage-way formerly used as quarters for the men nurses. It is in one story, the north side wall with windows remaining, but the south side walls have been entirely removed and replaced with wire screening, giving plenty of air to patients

just as if they were out of doors getting the full rays of the sun, summer and winter. As a protection in stormy weather curtains are arranged to pull down and thereby protect the patients.

Its introduction has proved a success, and many of the patients, mostly Spanish War veterans, have been helped. Experts who have visited it say it will compare favorably with other camps established for tuberculosis patients. The front extension with portico supported by columns, adds largely to the architectural effect of the front and greatly enhances its beauty.

A new conservatory has been erected which will hold ferns and other tropical plants to the height of thirty feet or more.

A new ice plant with new and modern machinery increasing the supply to twenty tons per day, which is used in supplying all buildings with ice, also for the butter rooms and refrigerators in the dining-halls, and last but not least the refrigerator in the morgue where those who die are placed until their friends may be heard from, as has been set forth in an earlier portion of this work.

A large building in which are concentrated the various trades, carpenter, paint, tin and machine shops, is supplied by the electric power plant with current where required. Electric power is also furnished to the laundry and bakery in which new and up-to-date machinery and appliances have been introduced.

Several of the wood residence buildings occupied by offices, nurses, etc., have been removed to more desirable locations.

All the old barracks have been thoroughly overhauled, renovated and painted, with new and modern plumbing to replace the old.

An enlarged water system for supplying the new buildings and for fire purposes has been installed, comprising twenty-two fire hydrants and five thousand feet of pipe has been laid for fire protection.

The fire engine and apparatus have been placed in the brick building formerly used as a machine shop and a new hose cart with five hundred and fifty feet of hose has been located in the old pumping station near the main gate.

Improved methods have been adopted for exterminating vermin or preventing their appearance. It is a credit to the watchfulness of company commanders that they seldom appear. When they do, those occupying the beds are punished by having their cards taken away and keeping them within the gates for from thirty to ninety days.

Disinfectants are liberally used in the toilet rooms of barracks and hospital, and every other means that can be thought of to add to the comfort and health of the members who are fast growing old,—their average in the last report being 69.18 years and would be somewhat older were it not for about ninety Spanish War veterans who are here as a result of disease and exposure in the Philippines. They are of about the average age that the veterans of '61-'65 were when the Home was first opened in 1873, thus reducing the general average.

The kitchen of the main dining hall was entirely destroyed by fire in 1907, the walls only remained standing. This has been rebuilt and refitted with every appliance in culinary implements that modern invention has devised.

Seven thousand square yards of cement walks have been laid during the past three years and the driveways greatly improved by laying fine ground stone over the oyster shells—the old way of road-making. The shells took a long time to get smooth owing to the little travel by vehicles through the grounds. The wind made them very dusty, sending the lime dust into the buildings and causing much discomfort.

Three old barracks, the oldest here, just going to decay, are to be torn down, and on a more suitable location others are to be erected similar to that of Company C, as seen in the illustration.

The most marked change in the running of the Home is

to take place on July 1st, before this book comes from the press, that is in doing away with the old veterans as waiters in the two dining rooms—the greatest innovation since the Home was started. Age is fast telling on the old boys, and it will be only a few short years until all the labor will have to be performed by civilians of a younger age of both sexes.

The Social hall is about to be vacated and will be arranged as a dormitory for the female waiters. Located where it is, in a secluded part of the ground, it will be a suitable and quiet place for them, and well adapted for such a purpose. The new dining hall for invalids has removed the congested condition and lack of seating capacity at meals in the old dining hall, and other changes have been made that add to the comfort of the veterans and obviate the crowding which has been the case heretofore. The hiring of females for waiters is a venture, but it is believed that it will work in a satisfactory manner, causing a more careful regard for table manners on the part of some who are fortunately in the minority.

A handsome building for the guard at the Phœbus Gate is contemplated. All this care for our comfort is being done for us as if we were going to live forever, but the increased number of deaths from year to year, as shown by the annual reports of the Board, tell the sad story that 305 died in 1905, 321 in 1906, 326 in 1907, 307 in 1908 and 308 in 1909.

“One by one we are passing over
The great divide between here and there,
Regardless of the care given us,
Old age will conquer everywhere.”

These figures, however, include all deaths outside of the Home, in other words, all on our rolls, as a considerable number die while absent.

It would appear that the only remaining work to be done, is to consider the criticism made by the writer in the last chapter, viz., that of an intercommunicating telephone sys-

tem, which is already in use in many of the branches of National Soldiers' Homes, that has been completed and is now in full operation. It is a great convenience in our daily work and also for use in our fire system. One great and important advantage of the telephone system is in securing quick attendance of the physicians in the quarters at night when the members are taken suddenly ill and in many instances in the past have died before their arrival.

New water pipes have been laid at a cost of nearly \$5,000, including a line of pipe for fire protection. Many of the large cities are adopting the same plan. It was found that in using the service pipes for fire use that the pressure was so great as to destroy some of the fixtures. Our fire pump had only a limited area of the grounds, but now it will be practicable to reach all of the buildings in the event of fire, and prevent much loss.

Other improvements are projected and only await appropriations by Congress to carry them into effect. Among these is a concrete wall abutting on Jones' Creek from the wharf to Hampton Bridge and when finished and the Creek dredged to a sufficient depth, will enable coal barges to come up to the new power house to be unloaded, thereby saving great expense in handling. The plans for a single arch concrete bridge at the Phœbus entrance are already drawn and only await funds to construct it, also a new guard-house at that point. All these improvements will add to the beauty of the place, which now cannot be excelled at any of the National Homes. Plans are also drawn for three more barracks buildings similar in style of architecture to those of Companies D, C and S, and many other proposed improvements only await appropriations by Congress, and when all are completed, the Southern branch will be one of the most complete of all for comfort, beauty and scenic effect.

A tunnel system has been constructed in the central portion of the reservation in which many steam pipes are installed. The tunnel is of reinforced concrete construction,

waterproofed by a patented preparation, and is six feet in height by six feet wide. The steam pipes range in size from three to fourteen inches, and convey both high and low pressure. The low pressure heating system is of the vacuum type.

The quarters of the companies have been refurnished with new beds, six inches wider than the old ones, and of the same size as those in the hospital, with new mattresses, also arm chairs and new lockers, which might be styled chiffoniers, having mirrors on the top, and a drop lid forming a writing desk. New and improved porcelain plumbing has been installed in the lavatories, wash rooms and bath-rooms in all the buildings, adding great comfort to the old vets, as well as hygienic improvement. Many other changes and additions have been made. Perhaps the most notable change is in the bakery, which is now completely equipped with new ovens and the necessary machinery and is in every way most satisfactory. The mess hall kitchen is greatly improved and copper tanks are now used to handle the refuse.

The conservatory and hothouse (the old ones) have been torn down and larger ones erected, with all modern appliances for heating and propagating the plants, and caring for them in the conservatory. The flowers are made up into bouquets and placed on the caskets of the dead. The new greenhouse is a very handsome structure and many favorable comments are made on it.

Over eight hundred thousand dollars have been spent in the construction and remodeling of buildings and increasing the acreage by sea wall and revetment.

All this has been done under the direction of Governor T. T. Knox, during the last four years, to whom great credit is due for his foresight in anticipating the demand for these large additions in order to bring the Southern branch up to the high standard it holds among the National Homes. He has given the best part of his life to this purpose and object.

Great credit is also due to Governor Knox for his work in planning all these extensive improvements and in locating

the new buildings where they would add to the artistic effect of the grounds, and his watchful eye is ever alert to see where greater comfort, convenience and cleanliness may be added for more efficiency in the management of so large a number who are rapidly reaching their second childhood. His suggestions are readily and promptly endorsed by the local manager, Ex-Governor Franklin Murphy of New Jersey, who gives much of his time to looking after the interests of the Home, and as quickly approved by the joint board of managers. His selection to fill the position of President of the Board, as well as local manager, formerly occupied by the late Major-General and United States Senator W. J. Sewell, was a wise one on the part of President Roosevelt.

Notable improvements have been made by removing old buildings, some of which have been torn down and others moved on rollers to more suitable locations, as has been done in the case of the Adjutant's and Chief Engineer's residences, and the nurses' quarters. The old Canteen has been entirely wiped out and the ground seeded in grass. The success of Governor Knox in this work is the result of his education at West Point and practical experience for several years as Inspector for the Board of Managers, which afforded him an opportunity to study the wants of the various Homes and the comfort of the members. His suggestions have been endorsed by the local manager and the board of managers, and have been carried out by means of generous appropriations by Congress.

Much more could be said of the beauties of the place, its grounds and well kept lawns, together with the view of the bay and Hampton Roads where Captain Worden with the *Monitor*, the pioneer ship of our present navy, and pattern for all other nations to copy from, proved that twelve inches of iron in the turrets (not hardened steel as now used) with the man behind the gun, was more than a match for a wooden hulk covered with old railroad rails as was the *Merrimac*. Our great warships gather here for review, and

from this point the fleet started last October on its practice voyage around the world.

A great change has come over the Home. The beer hall or Canteen is closed! Congress did the work, and while the writer is inclined to be conservative in his views in Chapter XVII, yet experience has proved since its close that he was correct in his opinion. The number of arrests from drunkenness and causes incident thereto were greatly increased after the Canteen was closed in comparison with the figures of the previous year when it was open.

Since the new Chaplain came in 1906, there has been a marked increase in attendance at the Chapel on Sunday and week-night meetings and an increased amount of money sent out from the post office to friends at home after pension day, and in addition to all this, a better feeling of contentment on the part of the old boys. The only thing that is missed is the revenue and profits from the sale of beer, which were used mainly to meet the expenses for amusement at the theatre and supply books for the library which, no doubt, will be made up by our generous Government in the appropriations for the years to come, but if a vote was taken, a large majority would say "KEEP THE BEER HALL CLOSED!"

An invitation is extended to one and all to come and see for themselves that the "*optic views and impressions*" as contained within these pages are no exaggeration; every attention will be shown you by the guides, and your visit made a pleasant one.

In conclusion, the author wishes to express his deep obligations to the artists, Colonel William T. Bennett, deceased, who was the first to scale the walls of Peking, and William J. Kelley, both members of the Home, and Miss Gray, a former trained nurse in the hospital, who took the pictures contained in this work, and generously, at their own expense and time, volunteered to aid in making the views true to nature.

NATIONAL SOLDIERS' HOME, SOUTH BRANCH,
July, 1910.